

LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER, 1887.

THE TERRA-COTTA BUST.

CHAPTER I.

A MESSAGE FROM THE HILLS.

AT nine o'clock on a June morning Dr. Paul Weisener stepped forth on the balcony of his hotel in the town of Viareggio.

The Herr Doctor was a tall and portly man of middle age, with an auburn beard, a clear blue eye, and a fresh complexion. His vigorous presence suggested that Northern type, the ancient viking, who, clad in helmet and corselet of steel, braved the stormy Baltic Sea to range from shore to shore in past centuries.

A servant brought him a letter. The envelope was large, while the enclosed sheet was thin in substance, of satiny texture, and perfumed with jockey-club. The missive informed the recipient that the Duke di Nespoli would take pleasure in showing him a collection of Etruscan relics at his property the Villa Margherita, situated in the mountain-town of Spina. The communication, inscribed by the duke's secretary, with many pen-flourishes, concluded with the usual graceful formula,—“anticipating a favorable response,” etc.

“He wishes to sell me the heirlooms of his ancestors,” mused Dr. Weisener, folding and replacing the letter in the envelope. “Very good! Learn, Signor Duca, that I will not visit the Villa Margherita. No, no! I am going instead to Chiavenna, the ancient Clavenna. You may keep your Etruscan relics, my friend, or send them to some antiquarian at Rome.”

Now, as Chiavenna is the key of the Rætian Alps, this resolution was the key of the Herr Doctor's character. He was neither viking nor traveller, in the usual sense of the term: he was a learned man. Possibly the tribute to his fame conveyed by the perfumed epistle of the Duke di Nespoli soothed his self-love in a pleasant fashion, even while thrust aside with firm decision.

The town of Worms was his cradle, where the Frau Mutter still sat at her window, an erect old lady of eighty years, gazing out on the Luther monument, across the space of the Luther-Platz. Early sent to Heidelberg, he had sworn fealty to the study of medicine with four comrades. The friends had also made a compact to meet and sup together at the Alten Kaiser of Worms once in five years and pledge the anniversary in a toast of Johannisberg.

Paul Weisener had broken his word, for a phantom had risen before him and beckoned him aside from the chosen path. He had relinquished his studies, abandoned his books and experiments, with the response,—

“I follow.”

The phantom was the shade of a lost people, the Etruscans. The vanished race claimed and found in him a willing slave. The student tracked the ancient Etruscan to the site of his long-obliterated cities, camps, and seaports. He gathered together tenderly the golden leaves of the warrior's diadem, the delicately-wrought jewelry of his women, the toys of his children, placing such relics in museums with the jars of terra-cotta, bronze mirrors, candelabra, and coins. He read the history of the phantom's career on the fresh coloring of the paintings of his tomb, whether nuptial banquet, funeral rite, or the passage of the soul beyond the grave, attended by the spirits of good and evil. Not satisfied with mere archæological research, the doctor pursued his hero, as the first peddler, of prodigious antiquity, across the Alpine routes, the St. Bernard, the Splügen, and the Mont Cenis, trading in amber of the Baltic with Egypt, and carrying iron, rudely smelted, to Great Britain in exchange for tin. Here was a primitive merchant with a keen eye to business worthy of respect.

The German, staff in hand, sought the imprints of the footsteps of this factor of an early commerce, and the shade, eluding him, retreated once more to the door of the sepulchre, a majestic form, clad in armor, and the flowing toga, borrowed by the later Roman, and mocked at his researches.

“What was I in life?” queried the ghost. “Did I spring from Lydian, Egyptian, or Phœnician stock? What does my language teach you?”

The savant had paused, foiled, even aghast, and mindful of Niebuhr's jesting promise to share his own private fortune with the man who should prove the origin of the Etruscan. Baffled, if you will, but defeated,—never! Discouragement was a word as unknown in his vocabulary as the mood “*langeweile*” was to his temperament. Spring shed her fragrant blossoms of almond and wild pear on ancient Fidenæ, summer smote Arezzo, the red city of the potters, on her arid hill-side, autumn rains dripped on the cliffs of Castro, winter gloomed above Perugia's citadel, framed in an amphitheatre of snow-crested Apennines, but the Herr Doctor steadily pursued his aim.

Parlan le tombe ove la storia è muta.

He sought ever the clue to the enigma to which he had devoted many years, aware that in the sepulchre

Dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around.

"No! I have no time to waste on the Duke di Nespoli and his collection," he repeated aloud, as if to confirm his resolution.

He frowned at the old woman, bronzed by sun and wind, with a basket of *ricotta* on her head, as she proffered the delicacy with a traditional, snarling call. "See! this is the good *ricotta*, made by the shepherds of Maremma. Fresh? *Altro!* Try it, ladies and gentlemen."

He shook his head at the book-vender, a patriarch with silvery beard and hair, and aquiline features, blanched by long winters in the shadow of some palace gateway of an inland city to the tint of those copies of Dante and Orlando Furioso, bound in shrivelled vellum, which he praised as he pushed his little cart beneath the hotel balcony.

He remained obdurate to the coaxing entreaties of the dusky boy from Volterra, with alabaster for sale, snowy white when fashioned into slender cup and vase, or golden as amber when carved into the semblance of Pisa's leaning shaft as it appears glorified by the sun of a summer noonday.

He tossed a *soldo* to poor, daft Cecco, who might have been a sea-monster just risen from the clinging weeds and coral of the adjacent wave, if he did not grin like an ape, as the coin was caught, thus evincing appreciation of the value of money, even in a rudimentary intelligence.

Before the spectator the blue sea extended to a pure horizon which still retained the soft, opalescent hue of dawn, and revealed the islands of Caprera and Elba in the distance, like faint clouds. In the offing a ship of war rode at anchor, decked with bunting for a *festa*, while fishing-craft slid into the little port, freighted with sardine and anchovy, the sails catching ruddy reflections as they were furled. On the beach the straw huts of the bathing-season, which so much resemble the wigwams of certain aboriginal tribes, were being linked together where later ladies would gossip, children play, lovers wax jealous, and the envious sting beneath the thatched roofs, with perpetual splashing into the waves, and a tumult of noise incomprehensible to the Northern races, unused to laugh, scold, and weep in a breath.

On the right hand rose the Carrara mountains, their serrated peaks sharply defined against the sky, and thence merging in softer curves to the promontory which shelters the Bay of Spezia. On the left the line of arid shore revealed the city of Leghorn at the next bend, and swept on to fever-haunted Maremma, and the monotonous waste of Campagna, marked by an occasional watch-tower, where listless guards perform their dreary routine of duty near salt-works.

Dr. Weisener knew and loved the land. He cherished the site of ancient Luna in the Spezian Gulf above the charms of Lerici and Porto Venere, basking in golden sunshine. The coast beyond Livorno signified to him the port of once famous Populonia, fitting sea-gateway to Volterra on the height. Ostia offered attractions above the Sorrento cliff, Ischia, and Capri.

To-day the road was deep in white dust, and the sparse shrubbery of the little square parched with drought. An Arab cook, tall and thin, wearing a cotton robe, striped like the petals of a tulip, turban, and yellow slippers, bargained with a stout contadina for a brace of ducks, the row of villas behind the odd pair rising against a blue heaven, with the crest of a palm-tree visible above a boundary-wall. A regiment of soldiers, commanded by a brisk young officer with the cock's plumes of the Bersagliere fluttering on his hat, marched to a summer camp, the bugle-note awakening the languid echoes. A band of orphans, in blue gowns and capes, guided by a meek sister in wide-winged bonnet, passed beneath the plane-trees, and vanished, as if in response to the tinkle of a church-bell. The water-carrier made his round, with sober gray donkey, and little cart stored with wicker flasks of limpid crystal fresh from mountain-springs. A penitent, clad in black gown and cowl, rattled his box for alms, pausing on the white road a moment, then flitting on, like some night-bird overtaken by day.

Evening found Dr. Weisener strolling along the sands, with his wide felt hat pressed down over his brows, and a cigar between his lips.

The Southern sunset had wrought such magic with the scene as flooding the sea with liquid gold, while each headland of the coast glowed orange and russet-red in the luminous atmosphere. The Carrara peaks gathered the sun's last rays, and the scarped surface of the quarries blushed from gray and white to sudden rose. Then the twilight came on in subtle, almost imperceptible gradations of change, fading the crimson and gold to pearly reflections on the glancing waves, and quenching the fiery beacons kindled on the summits by the expiring day.

The eyes of the quiet pedestrian, following the line of shore, noted the fitful flicker of a torch, which recalled to him Shelley's funeral rites, with libations of oil and wine, on these sands. He mechanically repeated,—

There's not one atom of yon earth
But once was living man;
Nor the minutest drop of rain,
That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,
But flowed in human veins;
And from the burning plains
Where Libyan monsters yell,
From the most gloomy glens
Of Greenland's sunless clime,
To where the golden fields
Of fertile England spread
Their harvest to the day,
Thou canst not find one spot
Whereon no city stood.

His gaze reverted to the mountain-range inland, in turn. Those peaks acquired the charm of an infinite suggestiveness, in the evening hour. The blue haze of heat which had earlier veiled crag and ravine was now deepening to purple shadow about the base, and brooded over the rice-fields, sown with sickly-sweet lilies.

Up there mortals are born, rejoice, suffer, and die, separated from the world by that atmosphere signifying remoteness in distance. Slaves

chained to the quarries, for the most part, they drill out the wealth wherewith to embellish the most distant lands, and remain themselves unknown. Marble of Carrara! The very name has become the epitome of luxury since the time of the Cæsars. The sculptor of every nation still dreams of the ideal imprisoned in the block, firm in the faith that he must wrest from the treasure-house of the mountains noblest achievement in lieu of dragging forth the reluctant mass of a Bandinelli, which, as Florentine wit affirmed, preferred to drown in the Arno, *en route*, to being hacked and tortured into the group of Hercules and Cacus. The mourner of ruder climes erects a tomb; the devout dedicate an altar in some favorite shrine, wrought in cornice and festoon, supported by flying angels; the wealthy shape a chimney-piece in the home of Mammon. The ships await their cargo in adjacent ports, and the roads are deep with the snow of powdered fragments. Nymphs, stately and firm of limb, last of the race of Ligurian women, who astonished the Gauls by their strength, once stepped down the paths, bearing blocks upon their heads. In turn, some self-guiding machine of the tram-car species will surely banish the creaking sledge and dove-colored oxen, with mild eyes, wide-spreading horns, and flanks shading to velvet black. Marble of Carrara! The quarries yield their harvest, veined and spotless white, summer and winter, finest in grain and polish since the Parian, the robe woven by nature to clothe sumptuously temple, bath, and hall, and crystallize the faces of the great,—long-dead emperors, and sovereign ruling women.

Dr. Weisener's cigar went out while he paused to contemplate the heights. He had received a message from those hills. Why should he not respond to it? The hour, the soft tranquillity of the scene, aroused a sentiment of human interest in those about him. He had followed the ancient Etruscan so long that he resembled the French philanthropist who perceived evils only at the distance of hundreds of leagues. The mountains drew him towards them by an irresistible spell.

A band of fishermen's children advanced along the beach, hand in hand,—wild and elfin sprites in faded rags, with bare limbs and floating hair. A ship passed on the horizon, bound for Marseilles. A meteor shot across the sky, glowing like an emerald for a second, then vanished.

The children dipped their feet into the wave, then retreated, laughing, to again link hands and begin to sing a Canticle to the Virgin. Their song was the voice of the twilight.

The Herr Doctor tossed away his cigar.

"I will go up there!" he exclaimed aloud.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE HEIGHTS.

THE June sun also shone on the little village of Spina on the heights.

Situated in the Carrara country, it was one of those hamlets which form a picturesque feature in Italian scenery, clothed in the soft color-

ing of a transparent atmosphere, and perched on the crest of purple Apennine. No graceful campanile raised a fretwork of arches against the blue sky, no dome crowned the mass of spreading roofs, lending the dignity of past magnificence to existing squalor, no golden mosaic sparkled on the façade of a mediæval palace: a cluster of houses in every stage of dilapidation was gained by the steep path which wound up in many a zigzag turn to the low arch serving as town gate. A street, roughly paved, and slimy, traversed the place, like an artery, from the gate to the Piazza above,—an open space flanked by the ancient church of the Annunziata, a shop or two, and opposite by the massive portal, twin towers, and long boundary-wall of the Villa Margherita.

The Piazza was necessary to the existence of Spina as a town. The houses, huddled together against the rock, as if to lessen the danger of being blown away in some tempest, with casements heavily grated, and an occasional gallery displaying the family washing fluttering at a giddy height from the ground, represented the shelter of a naked hearthstone, while the Piazza was a true open-air drawing-room. On mild evenings the townsfolk gathered here to take the air, the women with hands wrapped in their aprons from force of habit, and in grateful remembrance of the *scaldino* thus held, in nipping January weather, the men smoking the thin reed of native cigar which must be a Barmecidal feast to the lover of tobacco, as they lounged against the wall, youth singing, jesting, and dancing. At such times the gossip usually turned on the increased price of bread and salt, or the wages paid in the marble-quarries and studios, where the men worked. Cripples abounded, forced to subsist on alms, as victims of the accidents inseparable from such a calling. The whims of the last Count di Ginestra, their feudal lord, also furnished a topic of unfailing interest, although his death had brought no alleviation to the pinching want of the survivors gathered about his gates.

Winter storms swept through the old houses, and summer heat scorched the walls, while mould and decay stagnated about dark corridor and stairway. Flowers bloomed at Spina only when fostered on some sheltered window-ledge, and chiefly in tufts of wild blossoms and grasses gathered by the wayside to place before the shrine of the Madonna in a niche of the convent wall.

At the hour when Dr. Weisener received the note of invitation to visit the Villa Margherita, Sabina Regaldi descended the flight of broken steps from her home, and approached the public fountain, carrying the battered copper vessel which had done service in the Regaldi household since brought by the mother with her bridal dowry of linen and métal utensils.

The rill of water trickled from a stone urn into a sculptured basin, with a musical sound, and, above, the faded fresco of the Madonna, in her shrine of the convent wall, was protected with a glass sash. The oil-lamp suspended before the picture winked tremulously in the light of day.

The sunshine lingered on pretty Sabina, with her lustrous black hair twined around her head in heavy tresses, and her slender figure arrayed to all possible advantage in a faded yellow gown. The handkerchief

knotted about her throat was adjusted with a certain coquettish grace, while the feet in the worn slippers were small. The girl was a creature of frowns and smiles, fierce wrath and sudden caresses, with dark eyes glowing in a delicate, oval face, white teeth, and mobile lips.

A young man seated on the ledge of wall, with a crumpled journal outspread on his knee, saluted her with a gallant glance and word. The fountain was a rendezvous of the youth of Spina, and, aware of the circumstance, Sabina had placed a red carnation in her hair before descending the stair to obtain water.

"Good-morning, Sabina *mia*," said the young man, stretching his shapely limbs. "How pretty you are to-day!"

"Bah!" retorted Sabina, setting her little white teeth together. "There's nothing but work up here from morning to night, and so many mouths to feed. It will be a wonder if the father does not throw himself out of the window some day."

"Eh, *carina*, you are never idle," remarked the young man, without quitting his comfortable posture. "Your little fingers seem bewitched, sometimes. As for the daddy's jumping out of the window, reassure yourself on that matter. Vittorio Regaldi is a wise as well as an honest man. Be tranquil, my beauty."

Sabina looked at him with the mockery of a nervous, energetic temperament when required to contemplate the inert repose of a lymphatic companion.

"How well they have christened you *Il Bimbo*, Masolino Cari!" she exclaimed, in her shrill tones, as she rested the copper vessel on the fountain edge. "You are a baby, and have no more brains than the sheep yonder."

"It is not a sheep; it is an ass," rejoined Masolino, laughing.

"Well, an ass, then," added Sabina, sharply.

The two young people glanced at the spot thus indicated. A house, more massive in structure than the others, presented an irregular form to the street, while the portal studded with rusty nails, and the solidity of the walls, suggested a feudal stronghold near the town gate. The past history of the mansion was unknown to the poor lodgers now herding together on the different floors like a colony of sea-birds on some wave-washed rock. Opposite the fountain the wall of the lower story left a space of flat roof which the tenant had converted into a pergola by means of vines and flower-pots. Waving tendrils of tender green clasped lovingly the gray stones; roses, lilies, jonquils, and violets unfolded their petals to the warm wind wafted up the ravines from the Mediterranean Sea. Occasionally some deluded insect strayed from the rich Tuscan country on the other side, tempted by the fragrance of these blossoms into the belief that honey and pollen were to be had for the asking at arid little Spina, perched on the crag of hill.

The angle of the building afforded space for a shop, and above the door was the rudely-sculptured head of an animal.

This head, much worn and discolored by the rain and frost of years, was an object of superstitious interest and endless speculation to the town. Whether sheep or ass, it was bewitched, and, like the statues of the Alhambra vaults, guarded hidden treasure. If one could find

the true direction in which the hollowed eyes turned, there would be revealed the spot where a hoard of gold, silver, and jewels was concealed. Ah, what if the carved head mocked at such vain search, and the wealth were already in the clutches of Cesare Tommasi, owner of the shop?

Old men and women, endowed with the Sabine gift of dreaming still inherent in the Italian race, strove to solve the riddle, and strove in vain, while the rains of autumn traced fresh furrows resembling wrinkles on the animal's stone countenance, and winter nights decked his chin with a beard of icicles.

Had not Fra Antonio, the spiritual guide of this flock, been seen, with a brass lantern in his grasp, stealthily exploring the convent wall at midnight? Did not the Avvocato Medici once rent the portion of the dismantled building opposite, known as the Buttery, and, aided by his sons, dig beneath the foundations without other result than loss of temper and bruised hands, unaccustomed to manual labor?

The old people, on whose shrivelled features poverty had set an indelible seal, grumbled and sighed, shaking their heads over the ways of the world, then sank into the grave, leaving the burden of unsatisfied curiosity to another generation.

Buried riches at Spina might mean as much to the inhabitants as the overthrow of the Lombard tower of Robert Guiscard to build a castle with the money found by the Saracen near the ancient temple, guided by the inscription on the bronze circlet worn by the statue in the niche. Ah, if the dumb ass above the door of the shop would only whisper, "At the rising of the sun, on the kalends of May, I shall wear a golden crown."

Sabina and Masolino turned their gaze towards the mute head, tantalized and sceptical in their day.

A voice became audible in the pergola above the shop:

"Sabina *mia*, tell me, for the love of heaven, if this is the thirteenth day of the month."

"Yes," replied Sabina, promptly.

"I knew it!" exclaimed the invisible speaker.

"Why?" demanded Sabina.

"Because everything goes wrong, my child. There are thirteen buds on my rose-tree, and a worm is gnawing the roots. Thirteen birds flew over the Villa Margherita just now, one by one. I have observed that to be a bad sign. The next *terno* of the lottery will bring no luck to Spina, mark my words! *Madre di Dio!* when I opened my eyes this morning I saw the number thirteen on the shutter, as if written in fire or blood."

Pretty Sabina shuddered, grew pale, and made the sign of the cross, —a hasty movement which upset her brimming copper bucket on the stones and over her own stockings. Masolino crooked his fingers into the talismanic form of averting danger.

"Thirteen is the death-number," murmured Sabina.

"Devil!" muttered Masolino. "Perhaps she casts the spell of the evil eye on all of us. Who knows?"

The shop door opened, and a second girl, owner of the voice, came forth in quest of water.

She was a dwarf, scarcely more than three feet in stature, with a hump on her back, the large extremities of an adult, and a well-shaped face, capable of expressing pathetic resignation, lively malice, and bitter ill humor.

If the superstition prevailed at Spina that the deformed child brings good fortune to the household, even as the swallow builds her nest under the eaves, Pia Tommasi had not reaped much happiness in herself. After an absence of several years, she had returned to her native town with her father Cesare Tommasi, and she had ever before her eyes the window from whence she had fallen in infancy to be taken up, not dead, but stunted in growth.

Dwarfs abound in Italy, in sad contrast with their shapely brothers and sisters. The babies learn to take care of themselves at so tender an age, toddling fearlessly on the brink of peril, in the joy of using their own little legs, that it is no wonder if many topple over the precipice of manifold accident.

Pia nodded to Sabina, and ignored lazy Masolino, who rose, with a smile of taunting politeness, and offered to fill her water-jar.

"I can help myself," snapped Pia, standing on tiptoe to reach the fountain's brimming basin.

"The Duke di Nespoli arrived yesterday, so he cannot bring the ill luck of thirteen," said Sabina, who was as much vexed as a cat to splash her feet, yet lingered for a chat.

Pia shook her head gloomily.

"Perhaps your own father will bring home misfortune in his bag, little fly," teased Masolino, once more spreading out the crumpled journal on his knee.

A periodical was a mine of wealth to the young man, affording him a glimpse of the outside world and, at the same time, ample excuse for sitting on a wall and spelling aloud the contents to all listeners. The duke's own valet had bestowed this copy of the Roman *Fanfulla* on Masolino, with the supercilious bearing innate in his class, as one flings to a dog a bone. The gift had been received with profound gratitude.

The dwarf glanced at him askance, and her lip curled, revealing strong, white teeth.

"You are right, Bimbo: the father returns from Pisa to-day," she rejoined, in her grave and heavy tones, which sounded oddly, emanating from her tiny and twisted body.

Masolino arranged his curly hair with his hand, and read aloud:

"A little match-vender of Turin has been discovered to possess a fine tenor voice. He is to be educated for the opera. Born in Piedmont, he once walked to Paris and back, selling matches along the road."

"Listen to that!" cried Sabina.

"He had a chance," grumbled Il Bimbo, and he poured forth a strain of melody in his own mellow barytone.

"He used his legs, it seems," added Pia, darting a look of derision at the symmetrical limbs of the youth on the wall.

"*Per Bacco!* so he did!" assented Masolino, with unruffled good humor. "Here is a cure of garlic for hydrophobia."

"Go along!" scoffed Sabina.

"The Queen of Spain has arrived at Madrid," continued the oracle, running his eye over the second sheet of the newspaper.

"Did you see the Duke di Nespoli?" interposed Sabina. "He is handsome and grand, with such white hands."

Here the girl personated the duke and each of the gentlemen of his party, and even mimicked the bearing of the servants. She did so with such ease and drollery, her mobile features changing with every gesture and inflection of tone, that her companions were transported with sudden hilarity, and the neighbors at their casements, the cobbler at work in his door-way, joined in the laugh.

The Regaldi children came trooping forth to recall their sister to household duties,—mischievous Tito, idle Angelo, and dimpled Gignio, all very dirty and exuberant, with merry faces, bright eyes, and tangled curls worthy of study by Raphael or Correggio. Sabina, pausing to take breath, slapped Tito, with whom wholesome correction never came amiss, and hugged Gignio passionately, covering his blond head with kisses.

Pia, the dwarf, looked anxiously, even malevolently, at the children, who grew daily taller and stronger than herself.

At this moment a young man approached the gate of the town. He was flushed with rapid walking, and a certain excitement was apparent in his manner. He sought the fountain to quench his thirst, but first filled the jar of the dwarf and carried it to the shop door. He performed the task quietly, exacting and receiving no thanks. Sabina watched him coquettishly. She was the prettiest girl in the village, and claimed homage of all the young men. Guido Cari never vouchsafed her an admiring glance. Hence her interest in him.

"Good-day, Guido," she said, launching a soft and magnetic glance at him. "How is it you make no more portraits since the bust of Cesare Tommasi?"

Guido bent his heated face to the fountain rill. Pia replied for him.

"An artist needs subjects," she said, tartly.

Sabina drew little Gignio closer to her side, and caressed his curls, with eyelids modestly lowered. Vanity was as strongly developed in her as in easy-going Masolino. Why should not Guido Cari admire her softly-rounded cheek and tiny ear, where a hoop of gold and coral swung, despite the poverty at home? Sabina craved the withheld devotion. She was so pretty and so clever!

Guido raised his head.

"We are only peasants here," he said, in a dry tone.

Sabina gave him a black look. Pia smiled softly. The dwarf's rugged features invariably became sweet and calm when this friend was near, while her eye followed his movements with the affectionate fidelity of a dog.

"Oh, have you seen her?" pursued the last comer, with renewed excitement.

Pia clasped her hands together, with a gesture expressive of pain, in the swift conviction of some suspicion.

"Whom have you seen, Guido *mio*?" she inquired, tremulously. "Ah, thirteen is always the Judas number!"

Guido drew a deep inspiration, and gazed at the arch over the heads of his companions.

"I was coming from Carrara by a short path," he said, speaking hurriedly. "I met them all down yonder. There seemed to be many—I don't know."

He paused, with parted lips, and the color forsook his cheek. A gay cavalcade was entering Spina, with murmur of voices and merry laughter. The party consisted of ladies, mounted on donkeys, or clinging, with clamor of unfeigned terror, to the seats of primitive vehicles, attended by devoted cavaliers, and followed by children, servants, and the bearers of luggage of light weight.

Spina, for the first time, found her shabby and humble precincts invaded by a fashionable company fresh from the world of ease and gayety, of which she knew nothing, and the tumult of their voices aroused hollow echoes, as if the mountains were awakening to bid them welcome. One of the cavaliers blew on a toy trumpet as he passed beneath the arch,—a jest carefully prepared on the road by a fair conspirator.

A beautiful woman rode in the midst of the group, holding a child upon her knee. Her gray eyes rested on the houses and the people with interest. She pointed out Gignio and Angelo to the boy in her arms, urging him to toss the bag of bonbons he carried to the poor children, and bestowing, herself, a smile of ineffable sweetness.

The cavalcade swept on to the Piazza, and halted before the Villa Margherita, where the gentleman again executed a military fanfare on the toy trumpet, as the heavy knocker of the portal was raised and allowed to fall with a dull reverberation.

The door opened, and the Duke di Nespoli appeared on the threshold, with his hands thrust negligently into the pockets of his velvet morning coat. His features expressed only the most ingenuous surprise and pleasure. The *coup-de-main* was complete. The ladies were in an ecstasy of delight, the gentlemen laughed in chorus. Explanations of the jest of their coming were given with volubility and abundant gesticulation. The voice of the beautiful woman rose above the piercing clamor, softly modulated, yet sonorous as a bell:

"The baronessa is responsible for our excursion. She wished to see Spina, and Carlo has taken it into his head to spend his birthday up here."

"Yes, papa," chimed in the little Carlo.

"The baroness is always welcome," rejoined the duke, kissing the glove of the sprightly little beauty in question, as he assisted her to alight from a gray donkey decked with scarlet trappings.

The strangers entered the court of the villa, and the massive portal closed.

The towns-people hastened to the Piazza, attracted by a common impulse of curiosity and excitement.

The gracious lady must be the Duchess di Nespoli, who had inherited the Villa Margherita from her uncle, the late Count di Ginestra.

The door had closed all too swiftly on the brilliant vision. The fat Fra Antonio had seized his shovel-hat and waddled forth from the loggia in the shadow of the church wall, where he dozed in moments of leisure. A worthy man, with a big nose and a double chin, doing his duty according to his lights, the Fra Antonio belonged to that accommodating class of the clergy who, like the Father Niccolò Riccardi, while agreeing neither with Copernican nor Ptolemaic systems, prefer to believe that the stars are moved about by angels, in the vault of heaven.

At the fountain the young people remained bewildered and dazzled. Their ears had been saluted by the jingle of bells, laughter, and the peal of the trumpet, while their eyes were charmed by red umbrellas, rainbow-tinted wraps, fluttering ribbons, little boots set jauntily in the stirrups of refractory donkeys, tinkling bracelets, and white hands sparkling with rings.

Guido Cari had followed the cavalcade, and, pressing quickly to the front, had stood beside the duchess, as she alighted at the villa entrance. He devoured her with his ardent look, like one entranced. Did she perceive this rustic homage to her beauty, accustomed as she was to the open admiration of the capital? Her smiling glance had rested on the young man's upturned face a moment, and then the duke had put him aside with perceptible impatience. Guido heard the words breathed in the wife's ear, with swift change of tone from the badinage bestowed on the baroness:

"What fool's prank is this, Bianca?"

The question emanated from suspicious lips, half closed, and was accompanied by a frown.

The reply was inaudible.

"*Cristo!*" ejaculated Masolino, leaping to his feet, unmindful of the fascinations of a serial story, the "Mysteries of the Royal Palace," which he had commenced to read in the journal.

Sabina danced about with the children.

"Did you see the lace on their dresses, and the trimmings going up and down?" she cried, with sparkling eyes. "Oh, *bella!* What a hat the tall signora wears! What an *ombrellino* the little one carries! Eh! they are like the angels of paradise, these ladies. And how sweetly they smile!"

"It is easy for them to smile," retorted Pia, fiercely.

Her usual olive tint had given place to a greenish pallor. The gay troop of ladies and gentlemen seemed to have passed over her little body and crushed her. The sentiment was none the less painful because capricious. They were so handsome, careless, and happy, while she was feeble and insignificant, creeping ever near the ground! She hated them with a sudden intensity of pain and wrath, as she once more crossed the street to her own door.

The shop of Cesare Tommasi was narrow and dark, with the living-rooms in the rear.

The dwarf paused on the threshold, and her face cleared. She possessed all the instinctive shrewdness of a thorough business-woman, combined with patience and address. Her father had gone to Pisa.

Very good. She would utilize the advent of the new proprietor of the villa, after her own fashion. She began to sing:

"Il micino
Poverino
Gli è un gattino
Di pel fino."

She climbed into a show-window while she sang, and thrust nearer the grating of the casement a pair of cracked Pesaro vases of majolica, decorated with blue flowers and yellow handles. Then she drew from the drawer of an old carved bureau some fragments of damask and shreds of lace, which she looped in festoons across the pane, depending from them strings of beads, amber and coral, together with some peasant jewelry, such as sparkles on the Ponte Vecchio of Florence. These preparations would be useless for poverty-stricken, ignorant Spina, yet might attract into the web of a vigilant spider one of the careless flies of the Villa Margherita.

The strip of time-yellow lace, and the folds of damask, green, turquoise-blue, and crimson, recalled many souvenirs to the tiny creature perched in the window, with her head and heart of a woman and her body of a stunted child.

Cesare Tommasi, most timid and suspicious of men, had become infected with a mania for collecting, a sort of gambling especially attractive to the visionary and artistic elements of a Southern race. The old man had ventured to open a shop on the Corso at Rome, where Pia had learned to appreciate tapestry, enamels, ivory carving, and porcelain. In a bad season, which entailed speedy bankruptcy, parent and child had sought refuge at Spina, grateful for the shelter afforded them by the nook of the large house, guarded by the carved head of the ass on the cornice above the door.

Little Pia had looked at the noisy, turbulent world much as a mouse peers out of its hole, and the turmoil frightened her. At the same time the experience gained at Rome tended to render her oracular at Spina.

The dark shop near the town gate was the ark of safety whither Cesare Tommasi had transported his household gods and such worldly goods as he could snatch from the general wreck.

Customers were rare. The late Count di Ginestra had occasionally ordered brought to the Villa Margherita for his approval a Chinese cabinet, a rare musical instrument, or a plaque of the Renaissance. An artist had once bought a good specimen of convent-work, the Last Supper of Leonardo da Vinci, wrought in ivory inlaid on ebony, which appeared in the window opportunely, with the aid of Fra Antonio.

The shop could boast of little besides lumber. There were lamps without chains, chairs devoid of the requisite number of legs, tables that became paralytic when touched, and dilapidated screens. A crucifix lacked arms, a medallion of the Madonna the head; a fine picture revealed a yawning rent through the canvas. Cesare Tommasi collected this débris in the country as the Paris chiffonnier so recently

searched the gutters of the metropolis for the broken fans, antique watches, and lost jewels that from time to time found their way into his bag. When Cesare Tommasi discovered some true object of art, whether sold by poor gentlewoman or pilfered by a dishonest servant eager to coin a franc out of the transaction, he sent the treasure to one of his former colleagues at Rome.

Pia hovered, like a magpie, about the hoard that accumulated with the lapse of years and was seldom disturbed. Sometimes she groped in a corner and drew out a battered candlestick or the crystal flower of a long-dismembered Venetian chandelier. These fragments were her playthings, and there was still a sufficient element of childishness in her nature to make her question the bits of mosaic in silver mountings as to the places they had once filled, and confide to the statuettes and the pictures her own opinions, while weaving histories about them.

"*Poveretta*," she would say to a battered casket of tortoise-shell and brass, "you have fallen into the *cortile*, and one of your gilded claws is gone. *Abbia pazienza!* We cannot hope always to live on the *piano nobile*; only in heaven there will be no *primo* or *secondo*. Mind that!"

She was never so happy as when the young workman Guido Cari leaned against the wall or helped to search for a missing coin, while old Cesare spoke of the bold theft of the gem-studded vestment of Pope Pius II. from his native town of Pienza, and the fabulous wealth of the American who had purchased the Strozzi triptych in the Via Babuino the previous winter.

The terra-cotta bust, portrait of the proprietor, mentioned by Sabina at the fountain, was placed on a high shelf.

Spiders spun their webs across the ceiling, for the inmates of the place did not disturb their dusty festoons from one year's end to another.

The dwarf climbed down from the window when she had completed her task. Her foot caught in a loop of the red damask, and she stumbled against a rickety table, on which had been placed several much-mended Dresden cups. The table reeled beneath the shock, striking a large water-jar, which, in turn, rolled on the carved cabinet, pride of the shop, although only wrought of pear-wood, well oiled, and blackened. The cabinet tottered, the doors flew open, and the piece fell forward, with an ominous rattle of the contents.

Pia uttered a cry of dismay.

"*Misericordia!* what an unlucky day!" she exclaimed.

Her father appeared in the door.

Cesare Tommasi was a tall and thin old man, with shrivelled features, closely-shaven cheeks and chin, and mild blue eyes. His manner was nervous and deprecating, while his whole physiognomy was capable of a highly humorous expression on occasion. His head was twisted on one side,—a misfortune caused by his having once fallen asleep on a balcony, where he remained exposed to the damp air during the night.

He was not alone. A woman, tall, large, and somewhat clumsy in build, paused behind him, with a demure smile on her face.

Pia looked at the woman, and dropped the cup which she had just rescued from the overturned table.

"You here?" she murmured, and her little, beady eyes began to twinkle with anger.

"Child, I have brought the Emilia to see you," explained Cesare Tommasi, in his reedy treble of age. "I met her down at Pisa,—quite by chance."

"Go away," said Pia, brusquely. "We keep no servants at Spina. We are too poor."

Emilia coughed apologetically, and cast down her eyes, while a strange smile contracted her lips, as if inseparable from the scarcely perceptible shrug of her shoulders.

She was neatly dressed in black, and she wore a bonnet, trimmed with yellow flowers, instead of the lace veil of her class. Mildness of disposition and edifying patience were expressed in all her person.

Pia's gleaming eye noted every detail of this intruder's toilet, with the rapidity of observation in comprehending a whole which is so remarkable a trait in the Italian. If there was to be war between them, the little mistress of the house did not intend to go to the wall without a struggle.

Cesare Tommasi came to the rescue, rubbing his thin hands together the while:

"What will you have? Let us be tranquil. We have been getting married at Pisa, the Emilia and I."

"Married?" shrieked Pia, raising her hands to her head with a tragic gesture of despair. "Ah! misfortunes never come singly."

The bride stepped into the shop, and looked about her calmly. The premises did not equal her ardent anticipations, but she kept her opinions to herself. According to her creed, the *roba* in this world will ever belong to the person who knows how to take it.

"*Povera creaturina*, she needs somebody to take care of her," said Emilia, in her softest accents, and placing her hand on the dwarf's shoulder. "Look at all this broken china!"

Pia shook off the hand savagely, and sprang out of the door.

"My only child!" groaned the antiquarian, disturbed by his reception.

"*Che!* She will get used to the change," replied the bride, coolly. "*Caro mio*, I am dying of hunger. I pray you to give me a morsel of bread."

"Yes, yes. There is always bread in the kitchen, and a wine-flask on the stairway," said the venerable bridegroom.

"I never drink wine, my friend," rejoined the smooth voice of the interloper. "I have made a vow not to touch a drop, whether white or red, and since even the smell of it does me harm."

"*Per Bacco!* you come from a poor wine country, and that counts for something," remarked Cesare Tommasi, sententiously.

Pia heard these words as she quitted the place. She glanced over her shoulder, and whispered, fiercely,—

"Malediction on the woman from the Romagna!"

Then the little creature shook her clinched fist at the Madonna in the shrine of the wall, above the town fountain.

"Is it for this bad turn, Holy Mother, that I have prayed to you every evening and brought you the best flowers of my pergola?" she demanded, with profound bitterness.

Rage stifled her. She glanced up and down the street with dry and burning eyes. Should she tell the neighbors of the trouble that overwhelmed her soul? Should she hide herself from the sight of all, instead? She chose the latter course, and crept through a hole in the opposite convent wall. A small door in the rear of the detached building was unfastened. Pia pushed it open and entered. She was familiar with the place, and, crouching in one corner, yielded to despair.

Married! Her old father had been entrapped into wedding the woman from the Romagna, their humble household drudge of a servant at Rome. Pia had scorned Emilia for her slowness and stupidity, rating her sharply on many occasions. Now Emilia was her step-mother. Incredible fact! Pia would be deposed from her kingdom, the shop. Pia would be put aside from that companionship of equality with her father enjoyed by both for so many years, the old man in a much-mended leather arm-chair, and the little, wise woman perched on a high stool beside the table. What would now become of her? No wonder she had seen the number thirteen drawn in letters of fire on the shutter in the dawn of this eventful day.

Furious jealousy palpitated through her whole being, mingled with poignant sorrow for the treachery of her father. Suspicion, inherent in the Italian, awoke to feverish activity. *Why had Emilia married Cesare Tommasi and come to live at Spina?*

Pia raised herself on her elbow, and pushed back her dishevelled black hair, which covered her shoulders like a veil. Her gaze questioned the very walls of the deserted building, where she had sought refuge, for a solution of the mystery.

The room was long and narrow in form, with a lofty ceiling supported by dark beams, and many casements, devoid of sash and glass, but protected by heavy bars of iron. This was the place rented by the *Avvocato Medici* as the spot where hidden treasure might be concealed, as indicated by the carved head above the shop door opposite. The dimensions of the chamber were those of a chapel, but no traces of altar were visible. Spina knew nothing of the building, nor did the small band of nuns, driven forth by decree of government in the universal sequestration of religious institutions, possess more enlightenment. The structure had always been detached. The lay sisters and gardeners had made such use of it, in storing tools and domestic implements, as they saw fit, in the lapse of years.

A scorpion traversed the whitewashed wall. The lords of Ginestra were not of more ancient lineage than the scorpion family which had tenanted the same nook of the convent wall for generations. What was the deed of valor of the first scorpion, unless stinging to death some foe, even as the first knight of the Ginestra had stabbed his adversary, the Ghibelline, in the streets of Perugia, on a dark night, centuries ago?

Pia crept to the middle of the floor, unterrified by the scorpion, and knelt there, clasping her hands to her breast with passionate fervor.

For the first time in her life she prayed for aid to God the Father. Fear and defiance were struggling for the mastery in her soul. Extremes were a necessity to her torture of doubt and resentment. The need of supreme appeal was great, and she wished, also, to punish the Madonna of the shrine for having abandoned her in so cruel a manner on the thirteenth day of the month.

"Pia! Where is Pia?" called Guido Cari.

The dwarf listened in breathless suspense, while color suffused her face, and her eyelids trembled. Guido remembered her. She shrank back into the most obscure corner, but the tears came in heavy drops and rained down on the stone pavement. The conviction that she was not forgotten soothed her pride, and the flood of weeping relieved her oppressed heart.

The young man Guido Cari divined the situation at a glance. No formal presentation took place, but the new Signora Tommasi smiled upon him as a neighbor. She was prepared to propitiate the town of Spina. She liked to stand well with people, and yet the ground had ever crumbled away beneath her feet.

"Where is Pia?" repeated Guido. "I wish to tell her about the Duke di Nespoli."

The blood coursed like quicksilver through his veins, new emotions, hitherto dormant in his nature, were awakening in his breast, while bewildering images thronged his brain. He needed a listener, and the sole confidante he had at Spina was the tiny, dwarf woman, Pia Tommasi. He was surprised and indignant at her absence. Why should she not be there to share his agitation?

Cesare Tommasi smiled, and his face acquired minute wrinkles, until he resembled the terra-cotta bust on the shelf.

"Pia has gone out. Patience! hunger will bring her back," he explained.

Emilia opened wide her heavy-lidded, usually downcast eyes.

"The Duke di Nespoli here?" she questioned, with sudden animation. "What is he doing at Spina?"

"*Madre di Dio!* the duchess, his wife, inherits the Villa Margherita," said Cesare, who was readjusting the overturned table, and collecting the fragments of broken china, with the philosophical resignation of an antiquarian.

"Do you know him?" demanded Guido, eagerly.

Emilia sighed, and shook her head.

"He is a great soldier," she said, evasively.

Guido turned away. The conversation of the newly-wedded pair was audible to him in the street.

"Who is he?" inquired the bride, coming and going to the kitchen, and adapting her usually low and muffled tones to Cesare's deafness.

"A good boy,—one of the marble-cutters. He made that portrait-bust of me in terra-cotta to please Pia."

"Ah, he is a sculptor, then?"

"No; a simple *scarpellino* like the rest. He may have a pretty knack for cornice-decoration in the studio. No doubt he has tried his hand at stucco ornamentation often enough."

Guido smiled bitterly and walked away. The voice of the woman from the Romagna still followed him, sharpened to a peculiar inflection:

"Does he get money from your *gobbetina*?" (little dwarf.)

Cesare burst into shrill and reedy laughter. "What put that idea in your head? There is no money here to give, either to him or to others."

Guido ground the heel of his boot into the pavement, with the movement of crushing a reptile.

"Evil wretch! I curse you!" he said, between his teeth. "Would you accuse me of wringing money out of Pia?"

This was the second anathema launched at the bride since her arrival; but in a land where blessings and maledictions are so readily mingled the wrath of Pia and Guido may have fallen harmlessly on the head of the Signora Tommasi.

Guido was only a simple stone-cutter, a slave of Carrara. He must work early and late to earn the pittance that kept the roof over the heads of his widowed mother, Masolino, and himself. Other men of his age were married. He never thought of marriage. To toil from morning until night and meet the claims of smiling Masolino, or the lamentations of his mother over an empty purse, kept other interests effectually in check.

To-day all was changed. He had met the beautiful lady Bianca, Duchess di Nespoli, and her smile had touched his heart, her look had penetrated his soul as light enters the bars of a dungeon. He was entranced and intoxicated.

He again sought the Piazza. The great door of the villa had closed on all that merry company of strangers. He seated himself on the church step, watching the donkeys and vehicles depart for the valley once more, while the servants darted about with deft agility. The church tower overlooked the paradise which attracted him. He tried the small door; it was locked. Fra Antonio had been called away to a dying parishioner. Guido sought Sandro, the cobbler, whose duty it was to ring the bells of the campanile.

The cobbler withheld the key in surly fashion. Had not Guido Cari given his shoe to a rival to mend, the previous week? Bah! The iron should be beaten when it is hot. This is a world of neat reprisals. It was Sandro's turn now, so he refused the key. What business had Guido Cari in the church tower at all?

The young man returned to the church step, where he meditated long, resting his head on his hand. He had forgotten little Pia. He had forgotten the quarries of Carrara, whence emerge the snowy blocks, and the workshops, where the white dust flies as an inseparable accompaniment to the monotonous chip of the chisel on stone. He beheld only the Villa Margherita and its inmates.

Masolino strolled out of the wine-shop on the corner, with the crumpled journal still in his hand. Handsome Masolino, with florid coloring, curling black hair, and silky moustache, twisted jauntily at the corners of a well-shaped mouth, was also a marble-cutter by profession, working when the spirit moved. Il Bimbo cherished many projects for bettering his condition, chiefly gleaned from the newspapers

he was so fond of perusing, and he spent entire days expounding them to his admiring mother and numerous friends, for he was as popular as his taciturn brother was the reverse.

"You here?" he exclaimed.

Guido made no response.

Masolino vanished around the corner, and Marianna Cari swiftly appeared.

She was a fat woman, with a yellow skin, scanty gray hair, and cunning little eyes, capable of weeping before her eldest son and laughing with the younger almost at the same moment.

Maternal solicitude took the form of loud cries. Was Guido ill? Had he quitted the studio? *Sanctissima Maria!* what would become of her, a poor widow, if he turned idler?

"I cannot always work. I am weary of it all!" retorted Guido, fiercely.

Fresh floods of tears and voluble lamentations followed this rebellious announcement.

Guido rose to his feet, goaded to desperation by the piercing clamor of his mother, and darted away. He dashed into his own home, and went to bed, where he remained obstinately silent to further comment on the part of his relatives.

The house of the widow Cari was the nearest approach to an inn of which Spina could boast. The father, in his last years of decrepitude, had claimed this distinction for his habitation by placing a withered bush in the window and a tarnished shield above the door, intended to designate a Black Eagle. Marianna Cari presided over the *Aquila Nera* with incessant grumbling, awaiting rare guests. Her sons found employment in the studios of Carrara.

The day waned, and evening succeeded.

Guido tossed restlessly on his pillow, until from feigning slumber he sank into a profound sleep.

Masolino was as much concerned as his bovine nature permitted. He sighed, and openly opined that the bread-winner of the family had contracted some deadly fever, and starvation awaited his kinsfolk as an inevitable result. These gloomy anticipations did not prevent the handsome youth from brushing his hair, assuming a red necktie, and sallying forth to take the air, with his mandolin in his hand to woo the ear of pretty Sabina Regaldi, or attract the admiration of the fine ladies at the Villa Margherita by the rich tones of his barytone voice.

Guido awoke with the bewilderment of one ignorant of the lapse of time incident to going to bed in the day. He arose, dressed himself, and went out. What was the hour? Surely it must be nearly the dawn.

A small form crouched on the step of the Black Eagle. Guido recognized Pia. She moved, and whispered, in a hoarse tone,—

"He has married the woman from the Romagna. I will not go home again!"

The young man patted the dwarf on the head. At her full height she scarcely reached to his waist. Poor Pia! He had forgotten her in his own ill humor.

"You must go home, and try to sleep," he admonished, using the more familiar "thou." "Have patience, little one. Who knows what may happen soon?"

Pia obeyed. She was weary and broken after the struggle of the past few hours. The darkness and silence of the convent building where she had hidden frightened her. She crept away down the dark street in the direction of Cesare Tommasi's shop.

The door was open. A figure emerged as she approached. The dwarf held her breath, and paused. The figure stood motionless for a moment, as if scrutinizing the carved head of an ass on the cornice, then crossed the street and knelt before the shrine of the Madonna. The lamp, which shed abroad a feeble and yellow gleam in the day, now burned like a star in the darkness, casting tremulous rays around.

Pia recognized her step-mother. Mad laughter welled up to her lips at the sight. She repressed her mirth with difficulty, and in order not to reveal her presence she glided into the open door and groped her way to her own chamber, where she buried her head in the pillow.

"Ha! ha! Ho! ho! She's come to find out the secret of the buried treasure; but our little *asinello* above the door will tell her nothing."

"Malice is the rust of the heart," says the Malayan proverb.

Guido Cari scarcely heeded the dwarf's departure. Sudden light-hearted cheerfulness came to him. He had shaken the previous day from his soul, as one discards a dull weight from the feet. Now all was peaceful and still. Was the elation of his mood due to the fact that all the town slept and he found himself alone? Even the villa was shrouded in absolute darkness, and Guido was aware that the great ones of the earth usually keep late hours.

He went in-doors, struck a match, and found the portion of food always placed on the table ready for him. The hint was understood, and he thrust the bread into his pocket. Return to the workshop was inevitable. The chain of routine still bound him. He struggled to free himself, then submitted with a certain sullen resignation. He once more quitted the house. He could await the dawn, seated on the step where he had found Pia. *Poveretta!* had she been there many hours?

Guido heard a shuffling step, accompanied by a cough. Sandro, the cobbler, was seeking the campanile, to ring the bells in honor of some saint of the calendar.

The bells of the old church of the Annunziata were kept in a good state of preservation. The lord of Ginestra fulfilled the pious duty.

Sandro unlocked the door of the tower, and began to pull the rope vigorously. He tweaked the cord for the repose of the soul of the old count. If the living were rudely awakened, let them repeat their prayers: the orisons would do them no harm.

The cobbler wrought himself warm with these agreeable meditations. The bells clashed their brazen tongues, and the tower shook with the vibration of sound. What was that, though? A black shape brushed past him. He ceased to ring, and peered about him, without discovering anything. The ringing finished, he shuffled out, locked the door, and went home.

Guido Cari was the dark object that had brushed past Sandro.

Aroused by the incident of the bell-ringing, he had crept into the tower and climbed the steps above. The bells swayed about him, startling the echoes by their clamor. The tumult exhilarated him, as, with humming ears and tingling nerves, he braced himself against the wall to resist the shock and avoid the swaying clappers.

The chimes subsided, and the bells returned to their usual pendent immobility.

Guido heard the cobbler lock the door below. If he was a prisoner he could not take the familiar path to the workshop across the hills. When day broke he would be able to look down from the tower on the Villa Margherita.

He waited, with folded arms.

Once more the town slept, and the last echo of the bells died away, in faint pulsations, to hushed stillness.

Then rose over the sea, and the ravine of Ravacione, a mist, soft and impalpable, now sinking into the gorges, as if about to disappear, and again forming against the cliff. Guido fixed his eyes on the drifting vapor. As he looked it acquired the outline of a flying form, divine rather than human, with draperies flowing in noble lines down to the valleys, and bare arms uplifted above the head, entwined in a wealth of tresses. A face he had already seen that day smiled upon him from the cloud-land thus floating above the sleeping earth.

A ripple of light sparkled on the gray horizon, and the mist, flushing to pink, vanished.

"It is the dawn," murmured the young man, and passed his hand across his brow.

The vision of Benvenuto Cellini, in the Roman dungeon, of the Madonna in a glory of molten gold, was not more vivid, nor more evanescent.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHILD KING.

DAY broke, clear and fresh. The near Carrara mountains and the distant Mediterranean glowed in full light.

Guido Cari crouched in the bell-tower, with his gaze fixed on the Villa Margherita, and the garden extending beyond the line of boundary-wall. He was waiting. For what? He did not know.

All the vague aspirations and brooding discontent of his youth culminated in the rebellion to circumstance of loitering in the campanile rather than going forth to his daily toil. Yesterday he had met the beautiful lady Bianca, Duchess di Nespole, on the roadside, her pensive features shaded by a hat of golden straw with soft plumes. In the mist of dawn he again beheld her, glorified to the semblance of Aurora, as if her image had just emerged from the inmost shrine of the Carrara quarries. The vision still intoxicated his senses.

The flowers of the parterre shed abroad their fragrance, and the fountain's spray rose and fell back into the brimming basin with a drowsy music most conducive to late slumbers. Goldfish flashed

through the clear waters. A peacock passed along the terrace at a stately pace, spreading his fan of iridized plumage to the sun.

The young man rested his arm on the casement-ledge, lost in soft reveries, while the bells hung mute above his head. In personal appearance he was not prepossessing. He was of the average height, with broad shoulders and sinewy limbs. His complexion was swarthy, his chin and jaw massive, and his rugged features alone redeemed from forbidding plainness by their expressiveness.

The stone urns of the terrace balustrade, filled with cactus and agave, the fountain, with the darting goldfish, the peacock, with the burnished crest, were all familiar objects to him. The thin and bent figure of the old count, wearing a velvet skull-cap, had vanished. Guido Cari had never experienced a sentiment of interest in either proprietor or residence. He possessed the indifference, in self-absorption, to all external matters, of the true artistic temperament. Guido could have carved his work in church and cloister, as Giovanni Pisano labored at Siena, when the town warred with Florence, and at Naples, with Charles of Anjou fighting the Sicilians.

What had he been, in his day, Count Alessandro? An accomplished gentleman, fond of society, poetry, the drama, and art, capable of quoting Dante effectively on occasion. Unmarried, he had carefully treasured the resources of a modest fortune. Such was the verdict of the world.

Spina had hoped for little from him, and received even less. In his prime the count recalled that he owned the Villa Margherita on the heights, situated in a deserted spot, where the autumn brought no revelry of the vintage, and the heavy detonation of explosions in the marble-quarries echoed through the ravines. His visit to Spina on this occasion had partaken of the character of a pilgrimage. He had announced a firm resolution to remain, gathering about him such treasures as had ever adorned the long-dismantled mansion. He attended mass every morning.

Why should Guido Cari recall the tale droned by his own mother and other old women in the Piazza of a summer evening? The count had committed some folly, or sin, in the heat of passion, and under the spur of wounded honor, down yonder in the world of Rome, and expiation was natural to a Ginestra. Had not the first lord of the name, a warrior of valor, centuries ago, beheld the depths of a forest, and a forge, wherein black men were tormented, and beaten, like bars of iron? His confessor made ready explanation of the dream. The black men were the souls of the damned, while the devil was the smith at the forge. Thereupon the knight had sought Spina, where he founded church and convent, and even fashioned of a mediæval stronghold, with two towers, the present Villa Margherita. Spina knew and respected the tradition, and it recurred to the mind of Guido Cari.

The garden was outspread before him, but the old Count Alessandro had disappeared, leaving only a shadowy memory. The nobleman had been lured back to the world after that period of retirement in his prime. He subsequently returned to Spina, when stricken with age, as the spot afforded a refuge for partial blindness, and hypochondria. The

town received a weekly dole of alms and bread somewhat grumblingly, and the recluse never again crossed the boundary of his domain. Then had followed a day when the fat Fra Antonio hastened across the Piazza, with the host carried under a canopy, and the attendant acolyte tinkling the bell that announced the lord of the place was dying.

What was Alessandro, Count di Ginestra, to Guido Cari, a young *scarpellino*, who had aided in the studio of his employer to hew out the marble sarcophagus erected in the private chapel of the villa? Nothing; and yet he was gazing down on the home of the dead noble with intense, throbbing expectation, awaiting in the church tower, with dilating eyes and parted lips, the awakening of the household. How many seasons had elapsed with the old count pacing the terrace, leaning on the arm of a servant, without Guido's heeding him! Even the task allotted his chisel on the tomb had been performed with the mechanical precision of indifference.

The young man felt a touch on his shoulder. He started, and raised his head. The dwarf Pia stood beside him.

"Pia!" he exclaimed, incredulously.

She nodded, enjoying his astonishment.

"How did you get in? Sandro is jealous of the key," said Guido.

"I've just put up a candle before the *Sanctissima* of the high altar," retorted Pia. "Eh! that may bring us good luck to-day—who knows? Everything came out in thirteens yesterday."

"Even to the bride fetched home from Pisa by the father," supplemented Guido, slyly.

Pia stamped her foot on the tiles.

"I found the sacristy door open, and climbed up here," she explained, ignoring the painful suggestion concerning her own household. "*Che!* I ask no leave of Sandro when I wish to visit our campanile."

Her appearance was as composed as it had been agitated the previous night. Her abundant and glossy black hair was carefully plaited, coiled about her head, and secured with a large silver pin. She wore her holiday costume, quite irrespective of winter cold or summer heat. This consisted of a gown of purple cashmere, a black jacket, and a yellow handkerchief knotted about the throat. Broad bracelets of gold adorned her wrists, and hoops of the same metal swung in her ears.

Pia's wakeful night had brought calmness. "God does not strike with both hands," says the proverb. When questioned as to her return home she affirmed that she had crept through the keyhole. At the morning meal she had greeted her step-mother with sarcastic politeness, then she had sallied forth with her candle to place it before the shrine of the Madonna in the church.

"Of course she prays for my destruction," reasoned the woman from the Romagna, but no tinge of warm blood suffused her face, haggard in the light of day.

Emilia mocked at Pia and her candle. She did not fear the Madonna of Spina as she would have dreaded the supreme Santa Maria Maggiore of Rome, Our Lady of La Quercia at Viterbo, and the miracle-working picture wafted on clouds from Scutari to Genazzano. Spina was not

even a famous shrine, a *memoria*, where pilgrims and hermits flocked and full confession of guilt was wrung from the most obdurate criminals. Even the church was a damp and dilapidated edifice, with a wax statue of the Virgin for sole ornament, and no store of tapestries, stuffs of damask, and golden tissue wherewith to drape door and column on high festivals. Cesare Tommasi's mature bride estimated shrines and people according to the amount of success and reputation they enjoyed in a time-serving world.

As Pia had crept towards the sanctuary, she had passed Masolino, lounging outside the Black Eagle, while his mother peered over his shoulder.

"Ah, it is a good sign to meet a dwarf the first person in the day," remarked Marianna Cari. "We may have a traveller before nightfall, and they are rare enough! Guido has gone to his work again, the saints be praised!"

Pursuing her way, Pia had laid the taper before the image, murmuring quite low,—

"You have not treated me well, Holy Mother, to deceive me like that yesterday: still, I do not wish to break with you wholly, *Santissima*."

Then she had climbed to the tower, tempted by the open door of the sacristy to peep down on the Villa Margherita, and found Guido crouching beside the casement. She was not surprised. She was seldom surprised. She possessed the philosophical cynicism which, in her people, is as old as the classical land they inhabit.

As for Guido, he speedily resumed his former posture of watching the silent house and garden. Pia would understand his unusual conduct without any explanation on his part. Pia was an echo of responsive sympathy. The generous soul in the quaint and twisted body of this little, wise woman was the chalice into which he had ever poured the gushing stream of his own aspirations. When he complained, railing at the chain of poverty which bound him to the quarries, she listened. When his mood was morose, gloomy, dispirited, she spoke, a pygmy in stature, yet capable of carrying his thoughts on the ardent wings of hope to the infinite and immeasurable glory of achievement.

Pia knew that since earliest boyhood Guido had employed all spare hours designing in clay or stucco, a practice which imparts great facility in modelling. From fashioning leaves, garlands, capitals, and heads of animals to the bust of Cesare Tommasi, progress had been simply natural development. The young man had often copied the works of the Carrara museum, and the basso-relievi of the studio walls, without method or instruction other than the intuitive perception of a quick eye and accurate judgment.

Niccolò Pisano once mused thus over the story of Hippolytus and Phædra, carved on the sarcophagus of the Pisan Campo Santo, containing the dust of Beatrice, mother of the Countess Matilda of Tuscany.

Pia was also aware that Carrara, like Genoa, with all the wealth of material at hand, has been sterile in art, save for the two sculptors Alberto Maffiolo dei Maffioli and Danese Cattaneo. Balm of Gilead in a dreary life! Pia believed in the genius of Guido.

At Spina the young man was recognized as her champion, and she owed him a debt of profound gratitude. On more than one occasion he had scattered a party of boys mischievously intent on teasing the dwarf. He had been known to silence the banter of handsome Masolino by the judicious administration of a kick, while the town looked on as passive spectator of any quarrel not strictly personal. Spina remained in doubt as to which brother deserved the most admiration, the elder for his courage in defending the weak, or the younger for his discretion in accepting without resentment a reproof emanating from the support of the family.

A shout of childish laughter broke the silence, and a little boy darted out of the villa in pursuit of the stately peacock. His brown curls were still tangled from contact with the pillow, and his dimpled body clad in a shirt, while legs and feet were naked.

Two ladies followed, chasing the child around the fountain, until the taller caught him in her arms, covering hair and cheeks with kisses.

"Look!" said Guido Cari, in a low and tremulous tone.

Pia obeyed in silence, but with her awakened curiosity was mingled a pang of alarm.

The two ladies, *en déshabille*, had emerged from the door in playful pursuit of the boy. The duchess in a peignoir of mauve cashmere, with the sunshine glowing on the masses of her blond hair, held the captive, smilingly, as he strove to escape and give chase to the affrighted peacock, unaccustomed to infantile pranks. The baroness held her draperies of maize-colored silk, fastened with knots of scarlet ribbon, above her little feet, encased in red silk stockings and high-heeled shoes. She glanced coquettishly at the closed casements of her votaries, as if challenging their admiration for her piquant charms even at this early hour of morning.

The baroness, of French extraction, belonged to the class thus described by the poet:

Some ladies love the jewels in Love's zone,
And gold-tipped darts he hath for painless play,
And idle, scornful hours he flings away;
And some that listen to his lute's soft note
Do love to vaunt the silver praise his own;
Some prize his blindfold sight; and there be they
Who kissed his wings which brought him yesterday
And thank his wings to-day that he has flown.

"Embrace mamma again," said the duchess, fondling the child.
"This is Carlo's birthday."

The baroness passed her jewelled hand over the curls of the little Carlo, and laughed bewitchingly. She had seen one of the shutters move, and knew she was observed by critical masculine eyes. She was apt to pose somewhat publicly in the display of domestic virtues, and appeared occasionally at the Villa Borghese of Rome in a sumptuous equipage, surrounded by the cherubs of her nursery.

"Listen, my angel," she said, in French. "You are the youngest child in the house, and it is your birthday. You must rule, and we will obey you."

Carlo meditated on this novel proposition with all the wisdom of his five years, holding his head on one side.

"Tell me a story," he entreated, clasping his arms around his mother's neck, and thus rejecting the Utopian project of the baroness.

The duchess began, in a soft and cradling tone:

"The good God bade the spring prepare food for the little caterpillar, and the cherry-tree became decked with fresh foliage. The caterpillar awoke in the egg of silk, where he had slept all winter, and crept forth. He winked his eye, and nibbled the leaves with discreet little teeth.

"'Oh, how nice is this salad!' he said to himself. 'I will never quit this table.'

"The good God then commanded that all should be made ready for the bees, and the cherry-tree bloomed with fragrant blossoms. The bees hastened to the feast, thinking,—

"'This must be our coffee. What deep cups and charming little saucers! Ah, there should always be plenty of sugar in the coffee.'

"'Now spread a dish for the birds,' commanded the good God of the summer.

"The cherry-tree put forth rosy fruit in abundance, and the birds came.

"'All this is for us,' they chirped. 'The fruit will give our voices fresh strength to sing.'

"'Each has received his portion, caterpillar, bee, and bird. Scatter the rest.'

"Immediately the wind blew from the mountains, the frost followed, the leaves fell, and winter covered all with a mantle of snow."

The voice of the mother, suave and caressing, not only charmed the child in her arms, but reached the listening ear of Pia and Guido in the church tower.

Carlo wished to personate the caterpillar, by nibbling the lace frill on the sleeve of the duchess with discreet little teeth, and then buried his nose in the rose worn by the baroness in her black hair, to sip nectar, as the bee. Imagination kindling with the pantomime, he slipped to the ground, and converted his one garment into wings.

"Bah! *Che storiella!*" cried the baroness. "I did not credit that Carlino was so stupid."

The boy ceased to caper, and frowned haughtily.

"Carlino is not stupid," he pouted.

The baroness pointed her finger at him derisively.

"Baby!" she said. "Ask mamma if, in the time of Watteau, Flanders did not cherish the dear St. Nicholas as patron of very small children, St. Catherine of girls, and St. Gregory of boys. *Eh bien!* Innocents' Day was even better, for then the youngest child of the family was dressed in silk and velvet and ruled everybody. We have neither Innocents' Day, nor Carlo's true *fiesta* of blessed San Carlo Borromeo, which falls due in the autumn. This is his birthday all the same. *Che vuole!* Let us masquerade at the Villa Margherita, *mon enfant!*"

The pretty woman clapped her hands gleefully, and Carlo, ceasing

to pout, began to caper once more, until seized and borne away shrieking, by an inexorable nurse, to the bath. The ladies followed to take their coffee, and the peacock was left in undisputed possession of the terrace.

An hour later a gay company pervaded the long-deserted villa. Ostensibly led by Carlo, the baroness was, in reality, the moving spirit. Her gayety was spontaneous, her wit unflinching. She furnished the element of quicksilver essential to society. Endowed with inventive talent in all the arts of ephemeral amusement, she now anticipated enlivening an otherwise dull day by suggesting the whim of a child to her companions. What were they all save children of a larger growth?

The Villa Margherita was a rambling structure, devoid of architectural beauty. The walls were painted yellow, the roof was protected by red tiles, the numerous casements were heavily grated. On one side the mansion formed a portion of the tiny Piazza of the town; on the other a vestibule, adorned with time-stained busts of Roman senators, gave access to the terraced garden. Two towers of rough stone, having ornamented parapets, flanked the house.

Such was the inheritance of the Duchess di Nespoli, who had never previously visited the spot.

The duke had arrived a day earlier, with a party of gentlemen, and little dreaming of the mischievous escapade of the baroness in following him. The object of his coming was an eminently practical one. He wished to inspect such treasures as the late count might have hidden away from the world at Spina. Did Gastone di Nespoli, handsome, vain, ostentatious, with Neapolitan blood in his veins, and already harassed by debt in a brilliant and spendthrift existence, truly anticipate finding riches other than the trifles of art collected by a gentleman of refined tastes? His wife's lineage was ancient, while his own title was new, and further gilded by such meretricious splendor as the rumor of being a king's son. Consciousness of the difference between them may have lent additional arrogance to his naturally wayward and imperious temperament. Leader of a club where play ran high, with horses entered in every racing-list of the kingdom, and the old Roman palace of the Ginestra, beside the Tiber, animated by the noisy gayety of his companions, the duke had still found leisure to scale the heights to Spina and rifle the villa of the treasures which it might contain. The duchess, passive to the verge of indifference, had offered no resistance. The marriage had been arranged by a skilful statesman, whereby the new Duke di Nespoli espoused the daughter of the Ginestra, heroes of the Crusades, soldiers, numbering popes and cardinals in their generations, and sometime knighted by Barbarossa, together with all her houses and lands. Such had been the compact.

The duchess, pale and proud, irreproachable in conduct, as the women of her race had ever been, was understood to live for her children and the world, with just that tinge of the *dévote* which lent the charm of mysticism to her character.

"A beautiful woman without religion is a flower without perfume," said Heine.

The villa echoed to the sound of merry voices and laughter. Shutters were flung open by white hands, and doors creaked on rusty

hinges. Questions, animated responses, and little, feminine shrieks of wonder and fright resounded through the hushed chambers.

"We must find here a costume for our Child King," exclaimed the baroness. "Yes, Carlino *mio*, depend upon it, there are jewels, laces, and chains of gold in these old coffers and cabinets. *Tiens!* We will search, and each shall wear what he finds, for the day."

She led Carlo through the suite of rooms, exploring every corner with bright, inquisitive looks.

The duke followed, smoothing his beard to conceal a slight sentiment of annoyance which he experienced at the turn of events, and thrusting his left hand into the pocket of his English morning coat.

The group entered the narrow chapel, where the incense of the requiem mass celebrated here still lingered. Saints adorned the *span-drels*, and a sad Madonna of the Sienese school drooped above the altar. In the pavement was inserted the worn effigy of the founder of convent and town, knight of many visions, clad in armor, with gauntlets of mail crossed on his breast. Beneath the window was the tomb of Count Alessandro, hewn out of purest Carrara marble by Guido Cari and his fellow-workmen of the studio.

The gay company made a genuflection before the altar, and crossed themselves rapidly. The baroness dragged forth some priestly vestments from a closet, pale amber silk, worked with crimson roses, and heavy with gold and silver fringes, then tossed them aside capriciously, as unfitted to her purpose.

Beyond the chapel was a loggia, enclosed in glass, with the ceiling frescoed in design of a majolica plate. This loggia contained several cases of bronze and Etruscan ornaments, urns, vases, and two sarcophagi, with female figures reclining on the lids, in robes still tinted red and yellow.

The baroness, with a swift and disdainful glance at these treasures, swept on to the large *sala*, as more worthy of her investigations.

The *sala*, with ceiling of dark rafters and floor of polished scagliola, had faded, as if in long waiting for the charming presence of the ladies who now entered it. The crystal chandelier held a few unlighted tapers, yellowed by time, and forgotten in the perpetual obscurity. The lamps suspended in the corners had corroded on their chains of brass filigree. Here and there a face loomed suddenly out of pervading blackness in a picture of the wall. Curtains of green silk draped the windows, while the furniture of white wood, elaborately gilded and covered with frayed yellow satin, was grouped about a central arm-chair, surmounted by a coronet, in ghostly mockery of state.

The duchess and her friend instinctively looked at the mirrors set between the casements and above the doors,—framed in mahogany and ebony, with classical scenes inlaid on the borders, and glass adorned with flower-garlands painted across the surface. Ah, too late! The flowers were dropping off in flakes, and the lustre of the crystal was dimmed and cracked. The baroness drew back, with a slight shudder, from contemplation of her own distorted image. The duchess remained, as if under a spell. "The mirror of truth," she murmured, with her habitual, pensive smile. "Old age beckons to us yonder, *ma chère*."

The adjacent rooms were hung with tapestry, depicting hunting-scenes, and arabesque designs, now bleached to a uniform greenish-gray hue. Carved cabinets flanked the walls, holding antique majolica of Urbino and Pesaro, a rare plaque of the Abruzzi, with metallic reflections, a Persian vase, glowing with color, and a Chinese bowl, adorned with a green dragon. Tables of jasper and mosaic were freighted with porcelain trinkets of jade and agate and specimens of Venetian glass. The helmet and cuirass of a warrior hung in one corner, surmounted by a tattered banner, and supported by a standard of mediæval weapons. A Byzantine reliquary of gold and enamel sparkled in the light.

The baroness did not hesitate to rifle of their contents little closet-recesses sunk in the masonry, thus revealing oddly-shaped drinking-cups of ivory, horn, and silver, books bound in stained parchment, and a case of medals bearing the portraits of long-forgotten princes. Her vivacity inspired her companions with a similar audacity of depredation. She flitted on, and was the first to enter the chamber of the deceased count.

The red damask curtains of the bed, closely drawn, as if he were still lying in state, did not awe the volatile lady. The apartment was lofty, and of dreary aspect. The russet tiles of the floor were humid, while the frescoed wall was discolored with patches of mildew. The three windows, heavily grated, after the manner of Italian country-houses, had been stripped of their hangings. Beside the bed was a *prie-Dieu* of carved wood, with a crucifix suspended above. On an inlaid table was placed a volume of missals, bound in crimson velvet, with silver clasps. It was one of those works dear to the Vatican and the dukes of Urbino in the time when careful penmanship and scroll design, as perfected by Vespaniano and his writers, rendered sovereigns scornful of mere printed books, the new discovery made by some barbarian of a German city.

A picture hung above a richly-wrought coffer. The picture represented Madonna Pia seated at her casement, awaiting death in the brooding mists ascending from the Maremma. The delicate head, bent forward, was seen in profile against the pale gold of the evening sky, the slender hands rested listlessly amidst the folds of the white dress, the hopeless eyes followed the distant flight of a bird.

At a glance the work was that of an amateur. The Count di Ginestra had painted it during those years of seclusion at the Villa Margherita. Was it a souvenir of memory?

The intruders, keenly susceptible to sentiment and artistic perception alike, understood the significance of the picture.

"*Che bella donna!*" sighed the gentleman who had sounded the fanfare on the tin trumpet when approaching Spina.

"Eh, Carlo! see the *corredo* in the corner," cried the baroness. "Surely we shall find something there."

The lid of the coffer was raised, and the contents soon scattered about the chamber. Folds of lace flowed over the rim, Venetian, Roman, Genoese, and antique Greek point, with a wealth of gold guipure, and disappeared, in turn, beneath rich mediæval embroideries

and fragments of brocade and velvet. The duchess uttered an exclamation of surprise as she opened a pearl inlaid case and unfurled the fan which it contained. The sticks of this fan were of enamel, set with rubies and brilliants, and the subject an *aquarelle* representing the wedding of a Ginestra with another noble house in the fourteenth century. Cupids held the shield of bride and bridegroom interlaced in a garland on the margin.

"This should have been my wedding-gift," said the duchess.

"Take it now, *chérie*," advised the baroness.

"It will serve for one of my daughters," mused the duchess, suppressing a scarcely audible sigh.

The bride depicted on the fan had brought her lord a portion of a million scudi, and dowered poor girls, in addition to maintaining five students at the art-schools of Rome, selected from the most intelligent youth of her own estates.

The children of the Duke di Nespoli would receive no such *dot*, in this extravagant nineteenth century. Even the day was rapidly passing when the contadini would spin and weave the bridal linen, as in the good time of such patriarchal custom.

"Why did the count bring all these things up here?" queried the baroness, exploring the chest.

"He once withdrew from the world to Spina," explained the duchess.

"*Per Bacco!* it was a duel, I have heard," supplemented the cavalier of the trumpet.

"Then here is the cause of the duel," added the baroness, unfolding a package of silver tissue-paper which contained a white dress.

The duke had paused beside the bed and detached the crucifix. The fineness of the carving did not interest him, but he tapped the wood, aware that dead men have been known to conceal a slip of precious writing, or a tiny key, in such receptacles.

"There is nothing here," he muttered, with chagrin.

How could one divine what riches might be hoarded at the Villa Margherita, as the residence of an eccentric recluse? The duke, aware that a system of modern banks obviates the necessity of carrying one's wealth in chains and collars about the neck, still dreamed of Damascus stuffs, Eastern carpets, scarfs of silk and gold, and strong caskets, filled with coin, concealed in the walls.

Carlo groped on the floor, and found an ancient medal, representing Africa as a woman, with woolly hair, holding in her right hand a cornucopia, and in her left a scorpion.

"Give it to me," said the duke, with sudden sharpness of tone.

He examined the medal as he had done the crucifix, and remained dissatisfied with the result.

The ladies gathered together the laces and stuffs, placing them in the arms of a maid.

"*Hélas!*" cried the baroness, "we have no costume of page or soldier for our Child King. We must devise one."

Returning through the loggia, the case of Etruscan ornaments caught her eye.

"A crown of gold leaves," she said, pausing. "Carlo shall wear that, at least."

"Dear angel of a baronessa, you surely would not make a child's toy of an Etruscan diadem?" the duke protested.

To oppose the coquette was to confirm her in any wayward resolution. She arched her white neck, and shot a dangerous glance at her host through her curling eyelashes.

"Why not, monsieur? We will not injure the crown."

The duke bowed, opened the case, and took out the ornament. His dissatisfied scrutiny reverted to the other objects of the collection.

"Andrea told me they were rare. I doubt it," he thought, pursuing his own train of reflections.

Carlo was speedily decked with lace and a jewelled chain, while a piece of velvet, copper and opal in tint, was wound about his waist for a sash. The crown of gold leaves was then placed on his curls by the caressing fingers of the baronessa.

"Now we must all obey you," she said, with a playful gesture of reverence.

"I wish mamma to put on the white robe," said the Child King, with such promptness as to warrant the belief that his tirewoman had whispered the suggestion in his ear.

The duchess consented with reluctance. The Madonna Pia of the picture had evidently owned this dress.

Guido Cari and his dwarf friend had not quitted the church tower. They were now rewarded for so much patience in their mutual curiosity by beholding the little Carlo once more emerge in the garden, wearing his gold crown, laces, and jewelled chain. The boy strutted about complacently in his new finery.

He was accompanied by his German governess, the *Fräulein Meyer*, and his two sisters, *Beatrice* and *Elena*.

The *Fräulein Meyer* was a tall and slender young woman, clad in modest black, and shod with those stout German boots which betoken a well-regulated organization in the capacity to wear them alike in winter and summer. Her features were rounded to insignificance, her complexion sandy and freckled, her eyes of palest blue, fringed with white lashes, and her blond hair neatly braided about her small head.

As companion of the Duchess di Nespoli the *Fräulein* was considered fortunate in the attainment of a truly enviable position, and yet her existence was only a degree less onerous than that of the modern hotel waiter, the Ixion bound to the revolving wheel of duty. She was required to be vigilant, sprightly, discreet, amiable, and useful from dawn to twilight, and she was never alone. Her accomplishments were as varied as the claims made upon them. She was expected to read the German poets with the duchess, when not lavishing all the skill of her superb musical education on pouting *Beatrice* or refractory *Elena*. The boy Carlo was never out of her sight. The mother was a kind mistress, the three children intelligent and affectionate, but when the governess had asserted the influence of her own superior cleverness, on some fitting occasion, they slipped away, like water trickling through her fingers, and mocked at her surprise.

The poor Fräulein was fond of concealing a yellow pamphlet among the Berlin wools of her basket, and, ceasing to ply her needle on the artistic embroidery destined for an altar-cloth in some favorite shrine, by the duchess, read thrilling romances, by stealth, in which she was destined to have no other share. Surely she may be pardoned if Victor Cherbuliez's inimitable "*Meta Holdenis*" became a study of fascinating importance on such occasions.

The church-bells began to sway, and Carlo, attracted by the sound, glanced up at the tower, thus discovering the eager faces of Guido and Pia.

"You are spies! Come down," he called, imperiously.

"Ah, such a beautiful little king, with his gold crown!" returned Pia, in a wheedling tone. "If he only knew what our Guido here could do on his birthday!"

"What can Guido do?" demanded Carlo.

"Ask him, *carino*, to make a model of the mother's face, or hand," suggested Pia, quickly.

The child kicked a pebble in the path with his shoe, in doubt, until his sisters explained:

"Yes, yes, Carlino! He is a sculptor, and you must have him model the hand of mamma on your birthday."

Pia clutched Guido's coat, dragging him down the steps of the tower, past the astonished cobbler Sandro, who was again pulling the bell-rope in the routine of duty, and crossed the Piazza to enter boldly the door of the villa. Guido did not attempt to resist his tiny companion in her impetuous haste of resolution. His breath came more quickly, and the blood mounted to his brow.

"Let us pass," cried Pia, shrilly, when a servant endeavored to oppose their progress.

They gained the garden, where the children were more interested in securing a feather from the peacock's tail than in their advent.

"Here is the sculptor," cried Beatrice, with the flowing tresses and starry eyes.

Pia clasped her hands and gazed about her with keen anxiety. Guido paused, in silence, and as if rooted to the ground.

The two ladies stood in the centre of a group, spreading out their robes as the peacock preened his silky plumage in the sun.

The duchess had assumed the white dress to gratify the whim of her friend. The soft folds of creamy-tinted silk fell about her slender form in the Florentine fashion of the fourteenth century. A band of pale blue plush bordered the square bodice and formed slashed puffs at the shoulder and elbow of the long sleeves, while a silver girdle, knotted on the hip, held suspended a velvet bag, with the lily, emblem of the city, embroidered in seed-pearls on one side. She carried the wedding-fan.

The baroness raised herself on tiptoe to salute her on both cheeks, in an ecstasy of delight. The gentlemen kissed her fingers.

The white robe, treasured by the old Count di Ginestra, had served at some fancy ball of a past generation, and of the history there lingered only a vague suggestiveness, like a faint perfume.

Guido Cari beheld, for the first time in his life, a beautiful woman, who appealed to his soul, as a type, whether Christian or Hellenic. The Duchess Bianca, standing on the terrace of the Villa Margherita, was to him Madonna, Venus, and Ariadne in one. She was the full revelation of

High grace, the dower of queens, and therewithal

Some wood-born wonder's sweet simplicity;

A glance like water brimming with the sky

Or hyacinth-light where forest-shadows fall;

Such thrilling pallor of cheek as doth enthrall

The heart; a mouth whose passionate forms imply

All music and all silence held thereby;

Deep golden locks, her sovereign coronal.

The baroness had adapted a ruff of old lace about her own throat and attached to her shoulders a drapery of velvet brocade, olive-green shot with crimson, in the form of a Watteau train, which suited marvellously well her piquante beauty, the brilliant eyes beneath black brows delicately arched, rich brunette tints, and mobile features.

Mankind admired, with respectful tenderness, the white-robed woman, but adored, with slavish homage, the idlest caprice of the wearer of the velvet train.

"A dwarf!" exclaimed the duchess, when she perceived Pia. "She will bring us good fortune, Carlo.—Welcome, my child."

Pia took the delicate hand of the lady and kissed it. Ah, how she would have liked to bite the ivory flesh with her strong white teeth! She could be patient when she chose. In the very jealousy of her heart an impulse awakened to manage all these large, strong, and rich ones of the earth, adapting them to her own ends.

"We came for Guido, gracious signora," she entreated, in a soft tone. "The little boy wishes him to model the beautiful hand of the signora, and afterwards to carve it in Carrara marble. He has talent, our Guido. Ah, if the signora only knew!"

"He is right to choose such a model as the hand of our duchessa," asserted the cavalier of the tin trumpet.

The duchess raised her fingers languidly, on which sparkled valuable rings.

"Guido is your brother?" she inquired, kindly.

"No, signora," replied Pia, decisively.

"Lover?" hazarded the cavalier, carelessly.

The dwarf's cheeks grew hot, and she drew herself up, as she retorted,—

"I have no lover. I take care of Guido Cari. That is all."

The droll aspect of the little speaker in thus proclaiming her protection of her companion elicited a laugh from the strangers, and even Guido smiled.

"Very well, my child. The sculptor shall model my hand," assented the duchess.

"Now?" questioned Guido, in an awed whisper. He did not venture to raise his eyes to the face of the radiant goddess before him.

"Soon. Wait yonder," said the duchess, indicating the terrace step.

Pia again grasped the coat of her friend, and drew him swiftly towards the spot designated.

"Don't spoil everything by committing some folly," she warned, in a hissing whisper.

Her face was pinched and drawn. Guido observed her with surprise, and then his entranced gaze reverted to the charming form in the white dress.

"When we are true artists at heart, we do not stare as if stricken dumb," added the tiny woman, scornfully. "All the world, the sky, the earth, the flowers, and the living creatures, belong to us, and yet we rob *nó* one."

Guido leaned his head against the stone urn, and the light breeze stirred his hair. His features softened, his look kindled, and his hands fell listlessly at his sides. Pia rested her sharp chin in her palm, and her elbow on her knee. She resembled one of those grotesque figures carved by Gothic artists at the angle of church door-ways and roof. In her eyes, fixed on the horizon, was the prophetic resignation of the Sibyls, foreseeing the evil of the world, yet powerless to avert misfortune. The voice of Carlo became audible:

"I wish papa to give me his purse."

The duke produced a pocket-book of scented leather. Gastone di Nespoli was ever prepared to scatter his wealth, although paper bank-notes replaced with him the golden ducats and florins of the Middle Ages.

Carlo received the purse gravely, and passed through the entrance door of the villa, escorted by his mother and the baroness, out on the Piazza.

By what instinct did Spina become aware that the Child King and the gracious ladies were there, in their fine costumes? The dresses taken from the coffer were not a whit too magnificent to charm the squalid little town. The other children must long remember the visit of their future duke, by each receiving a bit of money. The crowd gathered quickly, and pressed about these benefactors. Tales of distress were poured into their ears, cries and blessings were showered upon the Child King, as he made his triumphant progress across the Piazza, down the narrow street, and gained the fountain. Sturdy Gignio confronted him, and would fain have snatched the gold crown to place on his own curly head.

Pretty Sabina gazed enviously at the ladies, and managed to touch the velvet train of the baroness, furtively, which was gathered up over the wearer's arm. The instincts of the feminine nature expanded in the delight of mere contact with the silken stuffs, woven for princely wear, in the breast of the poor girl, condemned to cotton woof instead.

Carlo emptied the purse for Gignio, then shrank closer to his mother's side.

"Let us go back, mamma," he whimpered. "I'm afraid."

Cesare Tommasi stood on the threshold of his shop, with his bald head respectfully uncovered. Beside him was his new wife, modest in

bearing, with hands meekly folded. Emilia contemplated the Child King with a hungry rapture, yet it was from possible contact with her that Carlo had drawn back.

The duchess looked at her with a smile of mild and gracious interest. Bianca di Nespole possessed the supreme excellence of the Italian, the tact of ready sympathy.

"Have you sons?" she inquired.

"Oh, no, signora," replied Emilia.

Such was the scene presented to the contemplation of a stranger who approached under the arch of the city gate at the moment.

The cluster of old houses and towers rose against the blue sky, and the sunshine lay warm on the chrome-tinted convent wall and sculptured fountain. Half in shadow and half in dazzling light stood the two ladies, with the child, while the eager crowd surrounded them. Their attire, better adapted to the day of Boccaccio than to the nineteenth century, did not seem inharmonious to this spectator.

"If art is dead in the land, subjects for pictures still abound," he mused, pleased and interested, as one belonging to the class of those who go about contemplating the world, in the definition of the Venetian fisherman.

The stranger, wearing a broad felt hat, blue spectacles, and carrying a linen umbrella, was Dr. Paul Weisener.

He removed his hat, saluting the ladies, and glanced about in search of an inn after the fatigue of a long walk.

The duchess retraced her steps, with Carlo clinging to her arm, and the baroness tripping after, chatting familiarly with the women who still surrounded them. The crowd slowly dispersed, turning away when the Child King had disappeared.

Old Cesare Tommasi blinked meditatively, pausing in his shop door, and inspected the stranger.

"Who may he be?" he wondered.

"He comes on his own feet, but he wears a good coat," remarked Emilia, dubiously.

"Can he be interested in the collection of Count Alessandro?" piped Cesare, professional emulation awakening in his breast at the sight of an intruder.

"Who knows?" was the calm response of his new wife.

Ascending the street, Dr. Weisener paused at the sign of the Black Eagle.

The entire establishment was thrown into wild confusion by the arrival of a customer. The hostess remembered, while summoning Masolino from the wine-shop, that the sight of the dwarf Pia as the first comer of the day had promised good luck.

Marianna received Dr. Weisener with such composure as she could muster, and ushered him into a long, low chamber which partook of the characteristics of cellar, kitchen, and living-room in one.

Here a meal was served the guest on a table of questionable cleanliness, consisting of eggs fried in oil, cheese, and coarse bread. He despatched the food with the good humor of an experienced traveller,

and even drank a portion of the acrid wine in the flask placed before him by Bimbo with a flourishing bow.

Masolino leaned against the wall, and prepared to gossip with the foreign gentleman about the Villa Margherita, and such topics concerning the active world beyond Spina as he had gleaned from the reading of newspapers.

Dr. Weisener complimented him on his skill in serving a table.

"He is a good son, God be thanked!" exclaimed Marianna Cari.

The widow was much flushed and flurried by her culinary exertions, and scrubbed a copper vessel with her apron as she spoke.

Masolino received the just meed of praise thus bestowed upon him with a certain lofty humility. The signore was not familiar with the country, or he would be aware that the sons of Marianna Cari were not mere drudges of the Aquila Nera. He was an artist in the studios which abound near the marble-quarries, although willing to oblige his mother on this occasion. The young man passed his fingers through his hair, and once more lounged against the wall. Perhaps the signore knew his brother Guido, at least by reputation?

Dr. Weisener could not recall the name of Guido Cari at the moment. He was secretly amused by this display of naïve vanity, while aware that the native artist of the locality might possess talent.

Masolino accepted the apology as his due, and employed the damp napkin, held under one arm, to whisk an intrusive fly from the cheese.

"Guido is a good boy also," asseverated the widow, wiping her own countenance, abstractedly, with the apron which had so recently done service on the copper vessel.

Mother and son were already building air-castles out of the arrival of this guest. It was impossible for them not to estimate him, according to the Athenian code deeply ingrained in human nature, as an outside barbarian because of a different nationality. Surely he would not run away at dawn, carrying off the bedclothes in a bundle, as the last customer of the Black Eagle had done, always allowing that the doctor would be tempted to remain over-night. The hostess doubted this last good fortune, judging from the slender capacities of the bag hung over his shoulder, and the vigor of his limbs. Were there not hotels in the town of Carrara? Evil befall those caravansaries likely to thrust the Aquila Nera into the shade!

Masolino was of the opinion that fine opportunities exist to better one's condition in the cities. Dr. Weisener checked him, in a bantering tone, and with the advice to hold to his mountain home. Il Bimbo shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly. "An empty sack cannot stand upright," he urged, in a discontented tone.

The Herr Doctor bathed his flushed face, and smoothed his beard and hair, as preliminary measures to seeking the Villa Margherita.

The inmates of the mansion had partaken of an Arcadian repast, with much merriment, with Carlo at the head of the table as ruler of the feast.

When the stranger presented himself, the duchess was seated in the shade of the vestibule, with her hand resting lightly on the balustrade, while Guido Cari made a drawing of the member on a sheet of paper.

Pia looked on, with an expression of intense eagerness on her intelligent face. Guido had begged permission to sketch the delicate hand immediately, as clay for modelling could not be obtained.

The gentlemen loitered about, smoking their cigars, and the baroness deftly rolled a cigarette.

Carlo had made a mimic battle-field in one corner, with twin ranks of tin soldiers, Austrian and Italian. The Italian army was invariably victorious in this warfare, and routed the enemy with prodigious valor.

The advent of Dr. Weisener afforded a welcome diversion in the drowsy dullness of noonday.

The Duke di Nespoli received him with the easy affability of a grand seigneur, and presented him to his wife. The latter, divining the object of the visit, concealed her chagrin beneath her usual graceful demeanor.

Dr. Weisener forgot Etruria while subjected to the charm of her presence. The children were required to address him in German, according to a prevailing Italian fashion, and the supple Fräulein Meyer was brought forward, in complacent allusion to the banishment of the English governess previously *à la mode*.

"Germany and Italy are such good friends," said the duchess, with her fleeting smile, which the stranger compared, in his own mind, to the expression of Mona Lisa, subtle, delicate, and possibly ironical.

Pia scowled at the doctor from her post behind the chair of the duchess. Was he not interrupting Guido in his work?

Surprised by the anger of the odd little creature, the doctor turned, and discovered Guido seated on the step, his pencil moving rapidly over the paper outspread on his knee. This intruder saw more than the rest of the company, for Guido was making a sketch of the duchess, instead of her hand, a fugitive study, taken by stealth.

"Do not move, madame, I beg of you," said the doctor. "I should be reluctant to disturb an artist at his task."

Guido Cari raised his head, and the two men looked at each other. The doctor was inspired by a sentiment of benevolence and sympathy, and Guido by an impulse of gratitude. Long afterwards the former recalled the emotion. Did the latter ever realize that with the bearded foreigner rested his sole chance of even the echo of fame?

The duke, without too much appearance of haste, drew the guest away to the loggia, where the steward, Andrea Vanucci, waited to exhibit the Etruscan collection of the Count di Ginestra.

"Monsieur the Doctor is well known as an archaeologist. His fame precedes him everywhere," remarked the duke, with becoming gravity.

"I am too much honored by receiving even the notice of the Duca di Nespoli," replied the savant, with a profound Teutonic bow.

"He wishes me to purchase these things at double their standard value," was the reflection of the last speaker, as he examined an amphora of early Tyrrhenian workmanship, with a shadowy Alcestis parting from Admetus on one side.

The steward drew forth bronze mirrors, statuettes, and alabastrons for his inspection.

Dr. Weisener did not quit Spina that evening, and the heart of

Marianna Cari, hostess, rejoiced. A guest was to sleep beneath the roof of the Black Eagle. He dined at the villa, where the ladies vied with each other in paying him pretty attentions, the children went and came, and Fräulein Meyer fixed respectful looks on her distinguished countryman. Hospitality at Spina was more difficult than at Prince Demidoff's palace of San Donato, where a visitor might not only choose his favorite color in selecting a chamber, but change the hangings and furniture according to his mood. In the presence of the serene Duchess Bianca and the vivacious baroness, Dr. Weisener was not unduly discriminating as to the viands or vintage consumed.

The crystal chandelier of the large *sala* glowed with light, and the music of guitars, flutes, and mandolins resounded. The townsfolk gathered about the entrance,—moths attracted by the flame of unwonted splendor.

Guido and Pia remained in the shadow of the vestibule, never quitting the duchess with their gaze.

The garden and terrace were all warmth and fragrance in the twilight. The cavalier of the trumpet had succeeded in launching on the waters of the fountain-basin a fleet of egg-shells, each filled with oil and containing a lighted taper. This fairy squadron, pearly pink in the semi-transparency of shell, resembled a garland of lilies pulsing on the tide, with chalices of jewelled fire.

Little Carlo grew elfin with the approach of night, and resisted all efforts to deprive him of his golden crown. As the duration of his reign diminished, the Child King became more extravagant in his caprices. Each person who could gain his ear sought a favor, as the humble and the base gather about the steps of a throne. A few of these appeals reached him, while more were wholly unheeded by the small tyrant, as he ran about the paths, indulging in shrill bursts of laughter and song, which Fräulein Meyer strove in vain to repress.

At one time he dragged forth Sabina Regaldi, and cried,—

"Mamma, I wish you to take her into your service."

Sabina clasped her hands, with an imploring gesture, fell on her knees, sobbed, and laughed.

"Only try me, dear signora! Ah, try me, for the love of heaven!" she supplicated.

Again, Masolino was brought forward, with the announcement,—

"He is to sing, mamma."

Whereupon Masolino received permission, and, twanging the cords of his mandolin, rolled forth a volume of sound which made the very casements rattle. Rural melodies did not satisfy his soaring ambition, and he chose, instead, the *aria* from "La Favorita," rendering it with far more assurance than accuracy.

"*Cristo!* there is a voice," was the duke's comment, as he lighted a fresh cigar.

"They are making a fool of you, baby!" said Pia, speaking from the darkness of her corner of the vestibule.

Masolino deigned no response. He ran his fingers through his hair, and inflated his chest. The blood mounted to his brain, and the twink-

ling lights of the crystal chandelier dazzled his eyes. The ladies had admired his song and himself. The duchess had smiled on him, and the baroness had given him a very arch, roguish look. Both were prepared to fall in love with him. He was sure of that fact. Romances are made of such trifles.

Next the Child King insisted that the baroness and the duke should repeat an amateur French play acted in the Ginestra palazzo at Rome the previous winter.

The actors complied, with the best possible grace, and the audience prepared to witness once more *The Comedy of a Fan*.

The baroness appeared, waving the historical fan, and wearing on her head one of those wigs made of white silk which were so readily cast on flaming bonfires by sobbing penitents in the Middle Ages. She had bestowed the white robe on her friend, but kept for herself the wig, discovered in the depths of the coffer.

The duke had assumed a Persian dressing-gown, and an embroidered smoking-cap, as the jealous and exacting husband of Madame la Marquise.

The dialogue was rendered with so much spirit and finish, the play was so spontaneous, and the situation so harmonious, that the spectators could not doubt for a moment they were as second nature to the participants.

The duchess sat in the arm-chair, surmounted by the gilded coronet, and held Carlo at her knee. Inaction rendered him drowsy, after a happy day.

The comedy concluded, the Child King yawned, and urged Dr. Weisener to try the long-disused piano-forte of Count Alessandro di Ginestra.

There was a momentary hush of expectation when the stranger seated himself at the instrument. Carlo returned to the stool at his mother's feet, and rested his head in her lap. The duchess gently removed the gold crown from the boy's curls, and placed it on the window-ledge behind her chair.

Spina had heard no music, on the summer evening, like that drawn from the old piano by Dr. Weisener. The large, stout man took his place quietly, and ran his plump fingers over the yellow keys, weaving together chords of subtlest harmony, and veiling profound scientific knowledge beneath a graceful ease of movement in the rippling melodies best calculated to soothe the ear and screen the instrument from blame of harsh discord in all its rattling members.

Why did the *Pensiero* of Liszt recur to him, as he looked at Bianca, Duchess di Nespoli, seated in her faded arm-chair of state, with the creamy robe of some dead Madonna Pia clinging about her? The sound-wave framed another interpretation of Michelangelo's statue of Duke Lorenzo in the chapel niche, "with everlasting shadow on his face," already given fuller utterance in the verse of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and thus linked together music, art, and poetry in one thought about the old Florentine church of San Lorenzo.

The music ceased. The Child King was asleep.

The golden Etruscan diadem was no longer on the window-ledge.

What had become of it? While the company listened to Dr. Weisener's playing, the crown had vanished.

The Duke di Nespole lost his temper. His eyes flashed, his brow grew knotted, and his voice rose to a stormy note. An Etruscan wreath lost for such folly! In vain the servants searched garden, terrace, vestibule, and corridor; the crown was gone, and all efforts to discover it were fruitless.

Carlo, his reign over, was banished to bed, cross and tearful.

As for the baroness, the true culprit, she remained discreetly silent, and yawned, in turn, behind the historical fan.

Dr. Weisener withdrew to the Inn of the Black Eagle, leaving Fräulein Meyer in tears of rapture over his musical performances on the cracked piano.

The lights went out, and the towns-people slowly dispersed, bearing the stigma, consciously or otherwise, of having stolen the crown of the Child King from the window-ledge.

Guido Cari, worn out with the excitement of the day, sought his own bed, indifferent to the presence of a stranger in the house. The young artist thought only of a scrap of paper on which he had made a sketch of the duchess.

Pia stole down the narrow street to the door of her father's shop.

Cesare Tommasi was moving about the place, wringing his hands and groaning. An oil-lamp burned on the table, forming a star of light in the darkness of the vaulted room, and revealing, with a Rembrandt effect, the living head of the old man below and the terra-cotta bust on the shelf above.

"What is the matter?" demanded Pia, entering the door.

"To think that I have no chance at the villa, and a foreigner has already arrived to take stock of the *roba*!" lamented the antiquarian.

"As to that, the parrot talks and the magpie chatters," quoth Pia.

"Listen, my daughter. If I could have summoned the Pisani or Bartolommeo Niccolini, for example, we might have made a combination together. Who knows?"

"Where is the bride?" pursued Pia, wrinkling up her features, as if she had just tasted an acid fruit.

"She has not come home yet," rejoined Cesare, sighing profoundly.

Pia made a second comical grimace, and he laughed feebly instead of chiding her.

The worm-eaten frames and old furniture leaned against the wall. A Venetian Moor, with gilded tunic and arm lifted to support a long-dismantled candelabrum, loomed in the shadow, like the phantom of a feverish dream; a portiere of tattered silk waved in the wind, as if stirred by invisible fingers.

Pia climbed the stair to her own chamber. When Cesare ceased to move about the shop, soliloquizing in dolorous strain, and affronted by the novel indifference of his only child to the common interest of business which had united them for so long a time, she sought the terrace, where her favorite plants blossomed, and peered over the railing into the silent street.

The moon shone on the distant hills, and the town slept.

Pia waited in the pergola for a long time. At length her patience was rewarded. A woman entered the arch of the town gate. Pia recognized her step-mother. Where had she been? Evidently she had made the tour of the town outside the walls to gain the archway by a more circuitous route. She carried some object wrapped in her apron.

Pia stiffened to complete immobility. The animal's head, sheep or ass, carved above the shop door, and in close proximity to her own twisted shoulder now, was not more silent than the tiny spectator.

Emilia approached swiftly and stealthily. Night animals of prey have the same rapid and noiseless movements under cover of darkness. She paused before the door of the shop, peering intently to the right and left, in an attitude of listening.

Pia feared that those mild and veiled eyes, with their veined reflections of jasper and yellow, would pierce the obscurity and perceive her, crouching among the plants of the pergola. The dwarf was brave, with the courage often found in small creatures, but a chill crept over her flesh at this moment, her ears hummed, a sudden vertigo oppressed her brain, and she clutched the rose-tree to keep from swooning.

Emilia sank on her knees, and, in this attitude of supplication, slowly dragged herself across the street to the shrine, where she bowed her head to the stones in an agony of appeal.

Pia looked down on her without pity. Did her posture denote remorse, or mere prayer? She could not fathom the soul of the woman who had intruded on her life in such unwelcome fashion. How was Pia to realize the extent of her step-mother's ambition?

Emilia, ignorant, slow-witted to a certain extent, yet upheld by the conceit which often accompanies this temperament, prayed wildly for a pretty boy down in the plain. Oh that he might become such a one as the Child King! A foundling, herself, of the Hospital of the Innocents, she respected with a slavish servility riches, greatness, power. These gifts she would fain have for the pretty boy now idling away his time at the locksmith's bench in a dark street of the town. She had lied when she told the duchess she had no children. It did not cost Emilia much to lie. An apprentice to a locksmith? No! her boy should be a gentleman!

The dream had come to her when she first beheld the Duke di Nespoli at a military funeral. In the darkness of midnight in the little town of Spina on the heights, she again saw the city street, the palace with closed casements, the files of soldiers drawn up, and the funeral car, richly gilded, hung with garlands, and having torches flaming on the four corners. Then it was that Gastone di Nespoli, as commander of division, rode down the line, resplendent in a uniform of black and gold, pricking with the fretting spur his superb charger, just as the muffled drums rolled in unison with the swelling dirge. Humblest waif of the curb-stone, the woman from the Romagna had vowed that her boy should become a soldier like the duke.

On her knees, with her forehead bowed to the dust, she prayed to the Madonna and all the saints that the sum of money might be given her requisite to purchase the outfit for the military college, and the channel of advancement for a pupil be opened.

Pia slipped back to her bed. Later, she was acutely aware that a figure entered her chamber and bent over her pillow to judge if she slept. Frozen terror kept the dwarf silent, but she felt, through her closed lids, that a pair of glistening eyes pierced her brain.

The moon climbed the sky, and shone down full upon the town. A stray moonbeam penetrated the narrow casement of the chapel, and rested on the marble tomb of the old Count di Ginestra, who in life had been wholly indifferent to the people gathered by his death beneath the roof of the Villa Margherita.

CHAPTER IV.

A BUST OF THE RENAISSANCE.

DR. WEISENER paused at the shop door of Cesare Tommasi the following day. Refreshed by sound slumber, the traveller had arisen like a giant prepared to run his course of another twelve hours. He had paid his respects to the ladies at the Villa Margherita, where the gay company of the previous evening now appeared dull and listless.

As far as the count's collection was concerned, the excursion had been a fool's errand. Even the Etruscan diadem of leaves had been snatched away before the doctor's very eyes. What had become of the crown? He promised to communicate with the steward, Andrea Vanucci, should he have application from some museum for the contents of Count Alessandro's loggia. The transaction had remained in suspense at this point.

Dr. Weisener had strapped on his bag, and settled the account of Marianna Cari, hostess, without a murmur, even taking occasion to tip the somewhat dilatory Masolino, whose eyes were heavy with sleep, as he served the muddy coffee, long hoarded at the Black Eagle for such an emergency.

Cesare Tommasi lay in wait for him in the ambush of an artfully-baited trap.

"Yes, the cabinet is a good specimen," said the visitor, inspecting the premises.

"Period of the First Empire, signore," was the glib response.

"Humph! The Empire has not had too much to do with it, perhaps."

"Does the gentleman wish to see a true coin of Fiesole?"

"To be sure. A coin of Fiesole is always welcome."

"Eh! I believe it. One does not find such a specimen every day."

"What have you got up there, my friend?" continued Dr. Weisener. "A bust of the *Cinque-cento*? Impossible!"

"Does the gentleman like it?"

"Why, it seems to be a remarkable one."

Emilia, silent and watchful, had hovered near during this conversation. She climbed on a chair and lifted down the bust. She had not admired it, but the comments of the gentleman gave it value in her eyes.

"Che! our Guido made the bust, years ago. It is my portrait,"

explained Cesare, his thin face acquiring the furrows of suppressed amusement which the artist had faithfully reproduced.

Dr. Weisener nodded, tracing the resemblance from feature to feature in the wrinkled brow, pointed nose, hollow temple, and sunken mouth.

"He has talent, your Guido," commented the stranger, with that prompt appreciation in an indifferent critic which often bears such bitter fruit to the artist. "He must have intended to imitate the antique, or the period of Renaissance, in taking your likeness, and he has succeeded. Ah! how readily he might become one of those Italian artists who have discovered the true melody of movement, lavishing their labor on the frieze of flying angels in palace and cloister in provincial towns! Unfortunately, too many of the band have remained unknown."

Cesare Tommasi blinked meditatively. Respectfully silent in her humility, Emilia looked on. Pia emerged from the kitchen with sparkling eyes, and holding her head high.

"Guido will do more!" she exclaimed, with a vibration of passionate triumph in her tones. "One must begin, signore."

"True. You are right," assented the doctor, amused by her vehemence. "Thorwaldsen and Canova did not spring from the brain of Jove, like Minerva. Well, well, bid your Guido persevere. The bust is fine. The art of sculpture is ancient in Italy. Perhaps the first effort of the kind was that trunk of the vine carved into a semblance of Jupiter down yonder at Etruscan Populonia. *Che lo sa?*"

He bought the doubtful Fiesole coin, and the festoon of yellow lace arranged in the window by Pia the previous day. How well it would become the Frau Mutter, seated beside the casement overlooking the Luther-Platz at Worms, busily knitting!

Lace of creamy tint and texture seems to have been wrought especially for old ladies with silvery hair and delicate features.

Then the doctor went his way.

Possibly the trifling incident of pausing at the shop door of Cesare Tommasi guided the train of his subsequent reflections. Possibly the very marble country which had sent forth its store of wealth for so many centuries, and which he had penetrated on an errand without fruit, made him meditate on the work of Guido Cari. What would be the future of this untutored genius of the Carrara mountains? Would he be the friend of princes, the favorite of fortune, or remain always in obscurity? Would his epitaph be that of Desiderio da Settignano, on whose tomb Nature quenches her torch,—

Ma in van, perche costui
Die vita eterna ai marmi, e i marmi a lui?

The pedestrian turned a sharp angle of the path, and came face to face with the wife of Cesare Tommasi.

Breathless after running down the hill, with her hair blowing in the wind, and her usual composure of manner gone, Emilia appeared feverish and eager. She drew the bust from beneath her apron.

"Buy it, signore," she pleaded.

"Buy it!" repeated the doctor, in surprise.

"Yes. The signore may have it at his own price," she said, in a wheedling tone.

"I do not wish it at all," he retorted, a trifle contemptuously. "It is one thing to admire a work, my good woman, and another to desire to own it."

Emilia's brow darkened. She bit her lip, and looked at her companion obliquely.

"I thought the gentleman said it was like an antique," she resumed, in her mildest accents, after a pause.

"So it is," assented the doctor, brusquely. "That does not concern me, however."

He strode on.

Left alone, the woman from the Romagna scowled at his retreating form, reflected a moment, then, covering the terra-cotta bust with her apron once more, slowly returned to the town. She laughed bitterly, and raised her free hand to her head, as if the torrid heat of the sun scorched her brain. A sharp stone in the path cut her foot. Life had ever been thus steep and painful to Cesare Tommasi's mature bride, child of the Foundling-Hospital of the Innocents.

Gay voices and the clatter of donkey-hoofs resounded along the narrow, crooked streets, and beneath the arch of the dismantled gateway.

The Duke di Nespoli and his friends were departing as they had come. The baroness was petulant and a trifle bored; the children as impatient to ride away down the hill as they had been to scale the height; the duke scornful of the villa and its surroundings. The duchess alone was gracious, smiling, and sympathetic to the last, as became a great lady. She had permitted Guido Cari to study her hand, and intrusted the sum of money requisite to execute the work in marble to the vigilant Pia. Her last words were for the priest Fra Antonio. She promised to give a dowry to two maidens of Spina on a certain festival in the ensuing month of August.

Emilia drew aside and permitted the cavalcade to pass. Her veiled glance sought only the face of the duke, dark and haughty in his present mood, as a plant parched by drought may expand to the beneficent rain. The nobleman was to her a beacon-light.

Guido Cari, bareheaded, followed the party, with his gaze fixed on the duchess. He did not perceive Emilia, with the terra-cotta bust wrapped in her apron.

Masolino again lounged beside the fountain, with a fragment of newspaper in his hand. He was sulky and dispirited. Dr. Weisener had not taken his hints about accepting his services as valet or encouraged his seeking to better his fortunes in the town. A wise signore, forsooth! He was piqued and jealous that Sabina Regaldi had departed in the train of the duchess, who had kept her word. What changes a day had brought about at Spina! The whim of the Child King that Sabina should be enrolled among his mother's maids had been gratified. Yes, Sabina had bestowed kisses, caresses, and promises, never to be

kept, on her little world, and flown away. The young man was indignant, aggrieved.

Emilia observed Masolino attentively, glided into the shop, deposited the bust on a table, and again emerged. She approached Bimbo quietly.

"Would you like to go down yonder also?" she inquired, in a tone of authority strangely at variance with her usual deprecatory bearing.

Masolino was reading a thrilling description of a Texas assassin, Ben Thompson by name. He lifted dull eyes of listless interrogation to the woman's face. What was the use of wishing for impossibilities? Every one else had a chance, even surly Guido. Bimbo had been thrust aside for all Spina. The ladies had forgotten his fine singing. He had a legitimate right to linger at the fountain and nurse his own wrongs, while dwelling on the astounding deeds of the Texan assassin as defined by Italian journalism at a loss for other material.

"If you will take a box for me to Pisa, and tell nobody of the errand, you shall be paid. You need not return to Spina afterwards, if you prefer to remain absent," said Emilia, bending forward, in order that her words should not be overheard.

Animation returned to the handsome and bovine countenance of the younger Cari. He listened eagerly, questioned Emilia from time to time, and nodded assent to her murmured arguments.

In the twilight of that same evening Masolino disappeared. Spina did not miss him for many hours.

Cesare Tommasi was gossiping with the neighbors about the treasures, real or imaginary, of the Villa Margherita. At any other time the criticism of Dr. Weisener on the bust would have interested him, but now he could only bewail the poverty which prevented his purchasing the collection of the late Count di Ginestra. How could he foresee that the duke would wish to convert everything into money? It was true he had heard that the play ran very high in the palace near the Ghetto.

Pia waited at the Black Eagle to tell Guido what the stranger had said about the terra-cotta bust. She was ever ready to strengthen genius by the precious balm of encouragement.

Opportunity thus favored Emilia. Had she not made the opportunity?

Masolino departed without attracting observation. He carried a wooden box on his shoulder and five francs in his pocket. He did not glance behind him, although he was going out into the world as Sabina had done. What a momentous event, in shaping humble lives to other ends, the whim of the Duke di Nespoli in visiting the new inheritance of his wife had proved! Masolino realized with swift conviction that his chance had come and he must seize it. His spirits rose. He set his hat jauntily over one ear, and hummed an aria from "*La Favorita*." He was to walk to Pisa, carrying the box. What of it? He was accustomed to traverse the mountain-paths, and the burden was not heavy. He did not intend to drill and chip marble all his life. Not he!

The instructions of Emilia had been very clear and definite. He

was to seek a certain person on the Via del Borgo, near the Ponte di Mezzo, at Pisa, consign the box to him, and demand more money in payment. Further, this emissary was to request this Baldassare Menotti to seek the village of Torano two days later, where Emilia would meet him.

Masolino paused to rest on the steps of a ruined chapel. He placed the box on the ground and lighted a cigar. Curiosity prompted him to examine the contents. *Sapristi!* a man should know what he is carrying, at least.

The box was very slight, and yet the cover was firmly nailed in its place. The bearer drew a penknife from his pocket and deliberately loosened the nails, in order to peep at the object enclosed. While thus employed, he heard footsteps approaching, and hastily thrust the box out of sight in the angle of the chapel wall.

His color faded, his teeth chattered with sudden fear. What if the woman from the Romagna had followed him, like a panther, crouching ready for a spring? What if she swooped down on him, with that curious, tawny light glittering in her jasper-hued eyes which he had already seen? Masolino's cowardly heart sank at the thought. The spot was lonely, and they carry knives as long as your arm, those daughters of Forlì, Ravenna, and Rimini, which they are capable of using on occasion. A dozen falsehoods thronged into his mind, ready for use. He had hidden the box because he had seen two men of most suspicious aspect on the road. Such was the first excuse which occurred to him. Still better, these villains could have set upon him, and he rescued the case from their greedy clutches only by means of his own courage.

The steps drew nearer. Masolino ventured to raise his eyes, and encountered the abstracted gaze of his brother Guido. He breathed a sigh of relief. Guido was returning to Spina, where Pia awaited him with too much eagerness to heed the movements of her step-mother.

The young sculptor's face was gloomy, and his movements mechanical. Bianca, Duchess di Nespoli, had departed once more, but he still cherished the memory of her radiant presence. Was not her coming, even, a dream, a sudden dazzling vision? He observed Masolino without surprise.

"You are going to work?" he inquired, abruptly.

"Yes," replied Masolino, puffing his cigar, and once more feeling quite at his ease.

The crimson glow of sunset still suffused the western sky, while the hills grew dark and sombre with the shadows of approaching night. Here and there a tree stood out, in delicately-defined silhouette, against the pure depths of horizon, and pools of water gleamed pale in the brown earth. The air was sweet with the wild roses that bloomed in every hedge.

Guido passed on.

Masolino removed the cigar from his lips, and looked after his brother with a sly expression. Guido did not signify much, with his moon-struck air.

"Tell the mother I do not return home to-night," he said, moved by filial compunctions of conscience.

Guido assented negligently. Masolino had never kept regular hours. Thus these two parted.

Once more alone, Masolino drew forth the box, and removed the lid. It contained the terra-cotta bust of Cesare Tommasi, made by Guido Cari years before.

Masolino burst into loud laughter.

"The bride gave me five francs to carry this thing to Pisa," he soliloquized. "*Sangue di Dio!* I will take it safely, for it would not be worth stealing on the road. *Avanti! Corraggio!*"

He resumed his journey, with the case on his shoulder, the cigar between his lips, and a swagger in his gait which might be mistaken for courage.

That was the last seen of Masolino Cari at Spina.

CHAPTER V.

A BRIDAL DOWRY.

THE heaviest burden of change had fallen on Pia, the dwarf.

The great people had come and gone, leaving the Villa Margherita with closed shutters and the peacock pacing the terrace. Pretty Sabina no longer brought her copper vessel to the fountain, laughing and scolding in the same breath. Lazy Masolino had disappeared, and Marianna Cari, with the price of Dr. Weisener's board and lodging still in her pocket, went about sobbing. Evil times had come to the Black Eagle, with one son gone, while the other refused to work. Marianna poured her griefs into the ear of the neighbors, the old men seated in dark door-ways, and the old women patiently tending the babies. Had these not known trouble as well? The neighbors nodded and listened sympathetically. *Altro!* The Marianna could tell them nothing new in guise of human woes, still they lent ear to her.

Then Sandro, the cobbler, cast aside the shabby boot he was mending, and went to ring the bells, as if their brazen note, pulsing out on the sunny air, would bring assuagement to every ill. Such was Sandro's religion.

The father, old Cesare Tommasi, had deceived Pia by marrying again and bringing back the Emilia to be her step-mother. All the jealousy, suspicion, and revengeful instincts of her nature had been aroused when the bride entered the door. Was her place to be usurped by a servant, a drudge, a nameless foundling of the Innocents' Hospital? Pia found just cause of contempt for such a rival. Emilia could boast no fortune, and had even no store of linen. Bitter wrath filled the heart of the deposed daughter and poisoned her life, but in the tempest she held to one anchor firmly,—the advancement of her friend Guido Cari. She was not an ignorant one. She could perceive and admire his talents. There would be war to the end between the two women under Cesare Tommasi's roof, and the peace of the mild old man must be destroyed by their strife.

Pia determined to be patient, watchful, and calm. She would employ all the finesse of which she was capable to unmask the interloper. Hence her politeness of bearing.

At the outset she made a discovery that filled her soul with joy. Her smooth urbanity rendered Emilia uncomfortable. The latter was better prepared to meet petulance, sarcasm, rages, with the forbearance of a saint. Pia, imbued with the tricky spirit of the deformed, always at variance with her shrewd wit, resolved to tease and baffle where she could not hope to intimidate.

Alas for wise resolutions!

The day after the departure of Dr. Weisener Pia perceived that the shelf was empty where the bust always stood.

She uttered a cry of dismay which brought Emilia from the kitchen, where she was in the act of washing a salad in a large bowl of majolica, and her father shambling in from the street.

"What have you done with it?" shrieked the dwarf, fixing her glittering beads of eyes on the pale face of the taller woman.

"I, dear?" inquired Emilia, mildly. "What should I do with it? I've not seen the thing since I lifted it down from the shelf to show the stranger gentleman. Was it put back?"

Pia flew at her, and beat her with her hands, uttering piercing screams, and sobs.

"Liar! Thief! Impostor!" she gasped, choking with grief and anger.

"There! there, daughter!" interposed Cesare, striving to appease this transport of passion. "Let us be reasonable, and look about a little. I am of a good heart in the matter, I!"

Emilia stood calm, holding the dish aloft with firm hands.

The writer once saw a monkey, protected by a plaid blanket, led along a crowded street, to the amusement of the populace and the fright of all small dogs. The monkey, perturbed in spirit by such novel surroundings, turned, and clambered up the blue apron of a young working-girl, scolding her shrilly. The girl smiled with a merriment which increased the monkey's rage. Pia and her step-mother resembled this strong young working-girl, and the droll, wizened monkey, in their respective attitudes.

"Somebody has stolen the bust," reiterated Pia.

"San Antonio?" ejaculated Cesare Tommasi, shading his eyes with his withered hand to peer up at the shelf, "Pia is right! The bust has been taken away."

"It was always there until she came," cried the dwarf.

"Have patience, child," interposed the old man, nervously. "Why should it be gone now?"

"The head was not even marble," suggested Emilia, ignoring Pia's injurious accusations. "Perhaps other things have been taken. A thief who would steal the bust must be tempted by trinkets and lace."

There was a sneer conveyed in these words which stung Pia. She drew back, dried her eyes, and glowered at her step-mother.

Cesare Tommasi began to enumerate his treasures and ascertain if any of the objects most prized were missing. The eyes of his wife

followed him, noting where he kept the articles on which he placed the highest value, while she feigned to return to washing the salad. In the subtle gradations of impulse peculiar to the Southern temperament, each of this trio suspected the other of some plotting to gain the advantage. The bust was gone. What had become of it? "At least all else is safe," proclaimed the old dealer, after emptying boxes and searching the drawers of cabinets with a feverish haste to learn the extent of his misfortune.

Emilia deposited the bowl in the kitchen, and began to move heavy articles, in order to peer behind them.

Pia continued to scowl at her, unappeased by these demonstrations of a common interest.

"I should not have thought the bust worth anything; but, then, I am without education," said the woman from the Romagna, in her soft tones, which acquired, at times, a nasal inflection. "Can the other brother have taken it from jealousy?"

"Masolino?" questioned Cesare Tommasi, rubbing his pointed chin.

Emilia nodded.

"He was out there by the fountain when the gentleman praised his brother's work. Who knows? You might get the truth from him, *carina*, if you tried."

Pia meditated on this proposition.

"Masolino has gone away," she said, doubtfully.

"Eh! he will come back. They say he is a lazy fellow," retorted Emilia, casting aside her manner of a servant for the assurance of a mistress of the house.

A sudden light irradiated Pia's sombre face. She clasped her hands with a gesture of conviction. "Ah, I will track him! I can make Il Bimbo confess his sins. Wait until I find him!"

She set her teeth together, and went away swiftly, leaving her father still smoothing his chin, while Emilia smirked in the shadow, unperceived.

Pia paused at the fountain, held her hands beneath the trickling rill of water, and bathed her face.

"Fool! do you believe I can be deceived with such child's play? Still, it will serve! Let us accuse Masolino," she murmured to the bubbling water.

Guido Cari was stretched on the terrace of the Villa Margherita. He had not asked permission of the steward to enter, but had scaled the lower wall. The complaints of Marianna Cari were not without foundation, for he no longer worked. He dreamed; or was it that he had just commenced to taste the fulness of life? The taciturn, steady assistant of the studio had passed

From child to youth; from youth to arduous man;
From lethargy to fever of the heart;
From faithful life to dream-dowered days apart.

Circumstance could not drag him back to his former level. The people about him were rapidly receding to mere shadows. His mother's bitter reproaches fell on deaf ears. Only the previous evening he had

sown the wind, and would later reap the whirlwind, with his employer, the padrone of the studio, a choleric man, capable of using a human tool to the utmost, then flinging such aside. The padrone had insisted on Guido's immediate return for some pressing work on a bishop's monument. Guido, with a smile both vague and triumphant, had refused. He explained that he had a private order to execute. Then the padrone had chafed, stormed, and even threatened. He would not only close his own door for the future, but take measures to bar the portals of all other studios as well. Guido had shrugged his shoulders, and gone home through the twilight undisturbed, meeting his brother on the way. Threats did not dismay him. Escape from the workshop was his sole aim. On the ground beside him was a board, with a sheet of rough paper attached to the firm surface. He was sketching, with rapid strokes of the pencil, a female figure on this sheet.

Aurora, floating up from the clouds, raised her arms above her head, as if in freeing her limbs from the enveloping draperies she announced the day. The goddess, with pure outline of feature, the low brow, the limpid gaze, and the smiling mouth, was the Duchess di Nespoli. From time to time he compared the drawing with the original sketch made by stealth in the vestibule when Dr. Weisener was presented to the ladies. This need of outward expression alone saved Guido from despair at her departure. The artist triumphed over the man. He could enshrine her image in his thoughts for perpetual contemplation. Had she remained at Spina he would have worshipped her shadow, without daring to raise his eyes to her face. True homage is reverent.

Pia climbed over the boundary-wall, in turn, and approached the young man, singing. Pia always sang when she was angry.

The terrace reached, she stopped suddenly, and contemplated the drawing.

He turned, and glanced up at her, with a smile in which doubt and triumph were blended.

"Is it like?" he inquired, at length, piqued by her silence.

The dwarf's face had become gray and rigid, the features, indifferently fashioned by nature at the best, heavy, and the eyebrows prominent.

"Yes," she replied, in a dry tone.

"Who is it, then?" pursued Guido, in a coaxing, even light, manner.

"Our duchessa. She is a spirit flying over the mountains and the sea." Pia spoke clearly, almost sharply.

The young man rose on his knees, took her large head between his hands, and kissed her on each cheek.

"*Carina!* without you I should die!" he cried.

He thirsted for praise, encouragement, sympathy. Pia was always there, ready to accord these in full measure.

She disengaged herself from his embrace, and took a seat on the terrace step. Once more her concentrated gaze questioned the horizon, as her eyes had sought the solution of human mysteries when the Child King ruled the garden and the baroness draped herself and her friend in the old stuffs taken from the coffer.

Guido dropped his pencil, and contemplated, with his odd companion, the blue sky, and the sea, and the blooming plain between.

A great longing and a sudden fear clouded his spirit. He saw only the beautiful lady, in her perfumed silks, laces, and jewels, insignificant accessories to her loveliness, yet inseparable from her personality. The vision overpowered, entranced him. The tender depths of sky, the dazzling sunshine, the breath of the flowers, wafted upward from the rich bloom of the lowlands, blended with the image constantly in his thoughts.

Pia, crouching on the step, with her chin supported in her hand, told the tale of the disappearance of the bust. She spoke quietly, almost monotonously. The lava-torrent of her wrath, when she had flown at her step-mother and beaten her with her feeble hands, had suffered a check in the presence of Guido and the contemplation of his occupation. An icy touch had chilled the fever-heat of her anger to a quiet sobriety of tone and manner. Oh, yes, Pia could be self-contained if she chose. Down yonder the garden wall terminated in a brink of hill-side which made her giddy to gaze over. Better not attempt to plumb precipices, even if so clever, wise little woman perched on the terrace step!

Guido shrugged his shoulders, and elevated his eyebrows, as he listened. What was the bust of Cesare Tommasi to him now? He had taken a certain pride in rendering it vividly realistic, as an experiment, after listening to the conversation of a group of artists once gathered in the studio. These had discussed the Renaissance work of the same type, and the "grotesques" discovered at Rome contemporaneously with the Apollo Belvedere. Nobody had noticed the portrait of Cesare Tommasi when completed, and he had given it to grateful Pia. Truly Pia was always there, genuine emotion with her lending additional grace to the courtesy of Italian expression.

"Be tranquil, little one," he said. "The bust was nothing. Perhaps the step-mother dropped and broke it. I will make you a statuette of the good St. Christopher instead. He is the patron of the weak and the weary."

"Oh, you do not care, of course," flashed out Pia, glancing over her shoulder at the sketch of the Aurora.

No, Guido did not care. He need no longer spend his time in contemplation of wrinkles and lean countenances; he had become a true worshipper at the shrine of beauty. He looked at Pia with ironical amusement. Ah, how ugly she was! Did the same God fashion her, a swarthy, beetle-browed imp of a dwarf, and the stately Bianca di Nespoli, with supple curve of limb, graceful shoulders, and majestic head poised on a white throat? The prettiness of Sabina Regaldi had never touched his artistic perceptions. He had scarcely observed the girl.

Pia read the cruel thought in his eyes, as in an open book. She would have hated another for the injustice of it. She did not hate Guido. Oh, no! Had he not told her that she was necessary to his existence? Had he not assured her that he should die without her companionship? Pia gathered up these crumbs of comfort.

"The Signora Duchessa gave me the money to put the hand into marble," she pursued, brusquely. "It must be made without delay."

Guido sprang to his feet, and began to pace the path.

"Where? How?" he cried, passionately. "There's not a hole at Spina where I may hide myself to work, and I cannot go back down there. The door would be shut in my face."

Pia nodded her head.

"Courage!" she said. "We will find a place. The father would give you a corner if the woman from the Romagna had not come. May evil befall her! Masolino has gone away. Can he have taken the bust?"

Guido laughed incredulously.

"Masolino take it? Why should he? The bust would not have pleased him. Il Bimbo will come home when he gets hungry, and we can ask him," was the careless rejoinder.

The speaker paused on the edge of the terrace, and flung abroad his arms, as if striving to gain the valley.

"Pia, I must make the Aurora a statue, and life-size. Oh, I could do it." The words were wrung from him, like a cry. He struck his brow and breast with his hand, as if to confirm the resolution.

The little creature at his feet assented gravely.

"First you will model the statue in clay, Guido *mio*, and then in the white marble. Oh, *bello*! The Aurora will be the Duchess di Nespole, only nobody will ever know. That is our secret. Eh! the world will admire and praise a certain Guido Cari of Spina."

"Pia, I love you!" cried Guido, rapturous gratitude glorifying his usually unattractive face.

Pia did not change her attitude.

"Bah!" she said, twisting her features into an expression of comical derision. "I do not wish to be loved. *Che!* Love me when the statue is finished."

Here she drew from her pocket a paper which contained a thick slice of cold polenta.

"Will you favor me by eating?" she demanded, with the same suavity once displayed by a Florentine dust-boy, barefooted and dirty, holding out his ragged apron to his master, with the store of cherries just given him by the fruit-vender.

Her companion obeyed mechanically. He was not hungry. He had forgotten to take food that day.

Pia furtively brushed away a tear from the corner of her eye, and watched him eat, with a smile which was maternal in its solicitude. Had she not assured the great ones, in this very garden, that she took care of Guido?

In the church tower the bells hung silent, and beyond, the half-ruined turrets of the villa showed spaces of sky through the crevices and empty casements.

The fountain cooled the hot air with the silvery spray of gushing waters, and the goldfish remained nearly motionless in the shadowy depths of basin. A few white and yellow roses lay scattered on the path, as if the robe of the duchess had just swept them aside. Pia and

Guido, with the indifference of their race to the sun, lingered on the terrace, each absorbed in profound meditation. The situation was not unusual. How often they had thus passed hours without speaking, when a *festa* at the shop permitted him to indulge in reveries! The intimacy of daily intercourse had been resumed after the absence of Pia and her father at Rome.

In the evening the dwarf again sought her friend. She had seen the steward, Andrea Vanucci, and obtained his consent for Guido to occupy a corner of the vestibule while designing the hand of the duchess.

"I told him you would take such a little space, and give no trouble," she panted, with glittering eyes. "The gracious lady herself would surely allow it, if she were asked the favor. The *fattore* understands. *Altro!* He is a man of intelligence. You are not contented just to make a plaster cast. The hand of the beautiful lady must be modelled with care."

"Good!" said Guido, accepting the provision made for his need with the tranquillity of the artist incapable of personal management of practical details.

Thus the summer days passed gently, almost imperceptibly merging one into the other. The heat brooded over the land in an atmosphere of tremulous radiations, and along the shore of the tideless sea miasma gathered in low-hanging mists for the fever-haunted autumn.

At Spina the inhabitants dozed in the shade, when not obliged to work.

Masolino did not return, and Marianna Cari still scolded over her wrongs. In the household of Cesare Tommasi the two women wore the mask of outward civility. Father and daughter were aware that Emilia had made an excursion to one of the neighboring villages, going and coming empty-handed. Her reason was plausible enough. She thought a cousin dwelt there, and she desired to learn tidings of his family.

"Do foundlings have cousins?" taunted Pia.

"A cousin by marriage, little one," Emilia had replied, in mild accents.

The two even gossiped together amicably over the family meal. The Emilia described the people she had nursed in illness, for she had been taught the art of nursing by the pious sisters of charity who had reared her at the foundling-hospital. To behold her as she detailed the woes of the countess who had married a contadino of her estates, for a second husband, after placing him in the army, or the eccentricities of the Russian nobleman who kept a dozen pet cats, a casual observer would have believed step-mother and daughter the best of friends. Nursing was the prison-cell from which she escaped at times, only to be drawn back again by the high wages paid. In turn, Pia discussed the talent of Guido Cari, and her hope of gaining the patronage of the Duchess di Nespole for a rising genius. They freely revealed their surface-thoughts, while their actual feelings remained veiled.

Cesare Tommasi became grumpy over the loss of the bust. He valued his portrait after it had disappeared. Who had stolen it? He

blinked, and scrutinized his new wife. Had he taken to his bosom a viper? He was amiable in his outward demeanor, but misgivings racked his brain. He found occasion to whisper to Pia, with an expression of senile slyness,—

"It was only a marriage of the Church, child."

Pia's heart beat more quickly on hearing this announcement. The religious marriage would not hold without the civil contract. Was Emilia too ignorant to be aware of the fact? Did the priestly blessing suffice for her? The dwarf could not determine. She was unduly snappish with her parent, and still more affable to her step-mother, as a result of the communication.

"Why did you not tell me before, daddy?" she retorted, sharply.

Thus the filial staff on which he leaned pierced his hand, and the old collector was thrown back on fresh perplexity of doubt.

Sabina Regaldi's careworn father went and came to the quarries, while the children laughed and wrangled at home, where there were so many little mouths to feed. The mother displayed with pride money sent home by the new maid of the duchess. Sabina had not wholly forgotten the brood.

In the vestibule of the villa Guido Cari modelled a slender hand, guided partly by memory and partly by the sketch he had made. Not a dimple was missing nor a curve lacking. The steward, Andrea Vanucci, looked on, and smiled. The steward's plump wife and children assisted as art-critics, belonging as they did to the most appreciative nation in the world in such matters. Even the peacock craned its stately neck, as if to discover what was going on there in the corner of the vestibule.

Pia mounted guard, a pygmy of extraordinary energy and tyrannical disposition. At stated hours she took a morsel of bread or polenta from her pocket and gave it to the sculptor.

Marianna Cari presented her back when Guido returned home. Speedy ruin awaited the Inn of the Black Eagle. Guido had driven away his poor, soft-hearted brother Masolino by his wicked conduct. Such was the burden of the widow's lament.

Guido sought his bed in silence when night fell. He carried in his soul the cradling peace of those noonday hours spent in the cool shadow of the vestibule and the evening breeze of the hills. His pillow might be full of thorns, yet he slept in anticipation of the morrow.

Pia reasoned with and cajoled Marianna Cari by the hour. The older woman did not suffer herself to be more than half convinced and mollified by the glowing promises of Guido's advocate. Poor Marianna belonged to that class of practical, if timid, women who reap the inexorable condemnation of posterity by clinging to the daily wage earned by genius, rather than believing in the shadow of a future fame.

Journeys were made to Carrara and back. The clay was consigned to the mould of plaster, and then, with the money given by the duchess, converted into marble. Beneath the chisel of Guido, taper fingers, soft palm, and rounded wrist began to take form. How he loved the task! Pia watched him trace each line and tenderly polish the lustrous surface.

The work completed, she was not surprised to see him bend his head and kiss it reverently.

The month of August dawned, bringing a day which set all hearts at Spina throbbing with wild excitement and eager expectation. No mediæval herald approached beneath the gate-way, sounding his trumpet to announce his mission, unless the steward and Fra Antonio might be accepted as such messengers, but Spina learned, with incredulity, that two maidens of the community would receive a wedding-dowry on Sunday, gift of the Duchess di Nespoli, with a third, gift of the baroness.

The steward had been down to the sea-side with such rents as the property of the late count could muster, and the duchess had remembered her promise. Andrea Vanucci had taken the marble hand, and a letter written by Pia, with many flowery phrases of homage and supplication.

Education triumphed for the little woman seated at a table in a high chair. Guido Cari could neither read nor write,—deficiencies not too apparent here.

The Duke di Nespoli was absent at Paris, but he had made the weight of his displeasure felt through his secretary as regarded the disappearance of the gold wreath. He would do nothing for dishonest Spina after that theft.

The beautiful little marble hand had arrived when the duchess was keeping a fast for the repose of the souls of her parents. She omitted no tittle of the observance, and fed her children on *soupe maigre*, fish, and eggs from Friday to Monday morning.

The moment was auspicious. She was moved to aid the poor people of Spina. The first Bianca di Ginestra, heroine of the wedding-fan, had sent art-students to the capital. She would make a bride or two happy at Spina.

Such was the project discussed with the volatile baroness, who first mocked, and then added the requisite sum to endow a third maiden.

"Let this gift atone for some of my many peccadilloes," said the coquette, with a laugh.

Spina gathered in the Piazza on that memorable Sunday. The townsfolk had attended mass in the mouldy old church of the Annunziata with unusual fervor of devotion. The young people exchanged wistful glances. Plighted lovers sighed, made the sign of the cross, and prayed before each altar. Ah, if Assunta, or Maria, or Caterina might win the lucky number!

Sabina's mother, with Gignio and Tito clinging to her skirts, was indignant that her daughter should not have the chance of drawing a lot as well.

"If the Signora Duchessa had only thought of this before, Masolino and Sabina need not have gone away," she said to Marianna Cari.

The widow's tears readily overflowed at the suggestion.

"True! I thought Sabina liked Guido best," she sobbed.

"As to that, they are both fine young men, your sons," replied Signora Regaldi, diplomatically.

"Guido has quite lost his head, and the others have left us," wailed Marianna Cari.

The first lot was drawn by a very simple process: the steward's baby reached forth a little hand, plunged it into the hat held by the priest, and clutched vaguely a slip of paper on which was inscribed a name.

There was a pause of intense expectation on the part of the crowd, and the steward, standing at the entrance of the villa, read aloud the name:

"Pia Tommasi."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DWARF'S FORTUNE.

PIA had drawn the first bridal dowry.

The event was a miracle to the town, where each person had a different explanation to give of the circumstance, when the general astonishment had subsided. Pia had a lucky face: any one could see that. The lines of her right hand formed the letter M in the palm, which signified especial favor with the Madonna. Marianna Cari rejoiced, while the mother of Sabina shook her head.

"Where is the husband?" she cried, and the women of Spina took up the word, passing it from lip to lip, until Pia became the centre of a clamorous and gesticulating throng, envious, jealous, and ardently curious.

"Money always brings a husband," retorted Pia, with crimson cheeks and sparkling eyes.

She was still bewildered by the good fortune which had befallen her. She trembled from head to foot, and great beads of moisture stood on her brow. The fan of red paper with a gilded edge, so seldom laid aside in the summer heat, was crushed in her hands, without her being aware of the convulsive movement.

"Will you keep the dowry, then?" demanded a matron with five robust daughters, extending her yellow arm and skinny hand, as if to wrench away the prize.

"Yes," said Pia, steadily.

"Who is he, then, this husband?" shrieked the defrauded one.

Pia made a grimace, screwing up her features into a malicious expression.

"Flies do not enter the closed mouth, nor a secret escape it," she said, gravely, in her deep voice.

Cesare Tommasi chuckled.

"Eh! eh! the little one always keeps her head," he added, with paternal pride.

Emilia stepped between the dwarf and her neighbors.

"Let her alone," she said, in her calm tones.

Pia eyed her askance, as a bird looks at another bird venturing too near on the same perch of the cage.

The two other maidens rejoiced in their portion,—a slender brunette, and a plump blonde with red hair. Thanks to the whim of the baroness in adding her purse, the sum was considerable, each bride receiving five hundred francs. The blonde and the brunette were not

slow to clasp hands with their respective lovers, sun-bronzed young fellows, who gained a scanty livelihood in the quarries.

Pia stood alone.

Guido Cari, with a smile on his lips, was again at work in the vestibule of the villa, and heeded none of the rumors and conjectures of the town. Guido, in the public estimation, remained ever the sulky and forbidding member of his family, holding himself aloof from his kind, and without interest in the general welfare. Spina resented such taciturnity more than a large city would have done. Masolino, on the contrary, had a civil word for everybody, and was never above a friendly gossip. Spina remembered the fact, now Masolino was gone.

Guido, unconscious of the universal condemnation, was rapidly shaping a statuette of St. Christopher. What better embodiment of strength could he present to puny Pia? The fancy pleased him. Christopher, bearded, and with knotted arms bare, grasped his staff, and carried on his shoulder a child resembling the little Duke Carlo. The artist had even added the Etruscan diadem on the head of the angelic burden, thus rendering complete the likeness to the Child King. He intended to have the little model of clay cast in plaster and give it to Pia, thus atoning for the loss of the portrait-bust. St. Christopher should be placed on the bracket where the head of Cesare Tommasi had been treasured for years. The project moved him in his best impulses.

When the dwarf received her portion, she went home, escorted by her father and step-mother. Cesare philosophized, according to his habit, elated by the good fortune of his daughter. He had never thought of marriage for her, but, *corpo di Bacco!* why should she not marry? The steward, excellent man, must have put in her name among the eligible claimants of Spina. Where would the duchess find a more honest girl to endow? *Santa Maria!* Cesare was of a good heart towards all the world, and those who go softly will reach the end. Thus reasoned the old man, tottering and shuffling down the roughly-paved little street, with many sagacious movements of the head and confirmatory gestures of shaky hands, a pinch of snuff taken, with the aid of a red silk handkerchief, by way of conclusion to the conversation.

Emilia was smiling, animated, caressing. The increase of esteem in her manner was unfeigned. Emilia respected success with an instinctive, cringing servility. She adored prosperity with the envious homage of the unclassed and the outcast.

At the threshold, Pia paused abruptly. She had held her dowry tightly clinched in her bosom, with both hands. She now removed and unrolled the two bank-notes and contemplated them with a certain provoking deliberation.

Cesare Tommasi blinked. He knew the value of money. A greedy light shone in the eyes of the woman from the Romagna. Ah, what would those bank-notes not do for her! Her daring thought bridged circumstance in one dazzling flash of perception. The latent, savage, animal instinct of might making right awoke in her breast. The pretty, pouting boy, fretting in the dark workshop of the city street,

could be placed on the smooth path to follow in the footsteps of the brilliant Duke di Nespoli, with the aid of Pia's dowry. Emilia had picked up the requisite crumbs of information, here and there, in the vigils of sick-chambers, in the street,—a slow and ignorant creature, yet capable of turning all to her own advantage. Given the patronage of a great name, some benevolent nobleman with the right to admit a pupil, the boy should enter a military college, with a suitable outfit. She hoarded the coppers for this end, and longed for the fulfilment with an intensity which would render her unscrupulous as to the means employed.

Did Pia divine the thought of her step-mother? She grew a trifle pale about the lips.

"See, father," she said, "I will put the money in my pocket, and turn it. That will bring more,—much more!"

"True, child. The moon is in the first quarter," assented the old man, taking a fresh pinch of snuff from the tortoise-shell box in his pocket.

"I forget!" exclaimed Pia, striking her forehead with her hand, as if she recalled a pressing matter too long neglected, and moving away again.

"Where are you going?" demanded Emilia, sharply.

"Eh! I have the use of my own legs, I believe," retorted Pia, with a laugh. "I will come back immediately."

Emilia gave her husband a sombre and distrustful look.

"She might be robbed in the crowd," she muttered.

"You are right," he rejoined.

She followed Pia at a certain distance, and Cesare Tommasi, in turn, followed her.

Pia returned to the Piazza. She moved with extraordinary rapidity, and with the rolling gait which resembles that of some fowls. She did not glance back. If she was aware that she was tracked by her relatives, she did not betray the suspicion.

The towns-people still lingered in that central space, the square, which is the heart of all Italian cities.

The steward, Andrea Vanucci, and the priest, Fra Antonio, stood before the door of the Villa Margherita.

Pia made her way through the crowd, and clasped the leg of the steward with her short arm, just as her step-mother overtook her.

"Signore *Fattore*, you will keep the money for me until I need it, will you not?" she cried, in a loud, clear voice. "I might be robbed, you know, before my lover comes."

The neighbors laughed. Certainly the little one had ideas. Emilia grew yellow, and drew back, with her eyes lowered. She dared no longer interfere.

"What is this?" inquired the steward.

"I pray you to take care of my dowry," repeated Pia, with a world of entreaty in her gaze.

In certain portions of the East, when a woman rushes into a rival camp and ties a knot in the turban of the chief she is understood to have thrown herself on his protection, by all the laws of chivalry.

Spina thus accepted the act of Pia as she thrust the money into the steward's palm.

"Be tranquil, child," said the steward's plump wife, who was an interested spectator of the scene, with large gold ear-rings in her ears, and a string of seed-pearls around her neck, holding the baby in her arms. "Andrea will take care of the money."

"Let me kiss him," urged Pia, feeling the need of expansion towards her kind.

The baby, having acted as a special providence in the matter of clutching the paper in the hat, with inquisitive little fingers, was lowered to receive the caress of grateful Pia, which he did with the goggle-eyed indifference of his years.

The fat priest Fra Antonio pursed up his lips with an expression of disapproval. Who should be trusted to hold a wedding-dowry, if not one's spiritual adviser? How many times had Pia, the dwarf, confessed to him, as he sat in the confessional, with the green silk curtain drawn!

"*Padre mio*, the Signora Duchessa may not be willing to give the *dota* to such a poor creature as I," said Pia, quickly divining his displeasure.

The padre pulled his wide shovel-hat over his brows.

"It is well to think of that, my daughter," he rejoined, with lofty dignity.

Pia straightened her figure, and entered the door without noticing her step-mother. She was determined that the duchess should keep her word and accord the money. She had no false pride about that. It is one thing to give, and another to take back a gift. Of what use are great ladies in this world, if not to benefit poor girls and thereby purchase their own peace with heaven?

Pia joined Guido in the vestibule, and told him the result of the lottery, with much animation.

The young man was putting the finishing touches to the statuette of St. Christopher, with marked satisfaction in the result of his own work.

"You will marry? Impossible!" he exclaimed, more surprised by the recital than glad for his friend's good fortune.

Pia gathered a rose from the vine which grew along the wall, and began to strip off the petals, one by one. A red glow suffused her face and neck; tears of impotent wrath filled her eyes. It was the protest of her soul, mute yet passionate, against the injustice of nature.

"No," she said, after a pause. "What should I do with a husband?"

"We are better here as we are," said Guido, with unconscious egotism, as he smoothed the folds of the saint's garment. "See, Pia! St. Christopher will replace the daddy's bust on the shelf. You must promise to always keep it."

"I will keep it as long as I live," said Pia, with a swelling heart. "Now listen to me, Guido, for we have no time to lose. You may take the statuette to be cast in plaster. Very good. Afterwards you must go on to the Duchess di Nespoli. I will write a little letter. Beg

her to allow me to keep the money, even if I don't marry. Tell her I wish to have a home apart, as my father has just brought back a new wife. Pray to the gracious lady for me. Bah! I would go myself, if I should not be a year crawling there! Above all, do not return with a refusal. I shall drive you back until she consents. *Madre di Dio!* she must consent!"

It was Guido's turn to change color. He grew pale with emotion, and his hands trembled. Ah, to behold once more the Aurora of his dreams, who had awakened him to life! The possibility had not before occurred to him. He had been contented to loiter on the terrace, drawing the outline of her features. He had forgotten the entire world while modelling her hand in the shadowy vestibule. Now he was to see her again. Incredible joy! Oh, he would be Pia's messenger!

Pia crushed the thorns of the rose into her flesh without realizing it.

"You are contented to go?" she said, hoarsely.

"Yes! yes!" he cried.

His eyes sparkled, a crimson flush suffused his sallow cheek: he was transformed with the excitement of anticipation.

"You should come, also," he added, with compunction.

"I am too weak. You must walk, run, to bring back word the more quickly," she replied, petulantly.

Pia did not seek her home that day. Guido Cari was observed to depart by the road, without explaining the object of his journey to any one. He carried away the clay model of the statuette of St. Christopher as a sufficient motive for his errand.

The Emilia wandered about the town restlessly, and wherever she passed, with her eyelids lowered, her head held on one side, and her deprecating smile, she dropped a word, a hint, that Pia would marry the *scarpellino* Guido Cari. Pia might do worse; and as for the surly fellow Guido, a crooked wife would serve him as well as another. Emilia, with her strong white hands perpetually in motion, now clasping and unclasping, or rubbed together, as if in search of employment, had fired the train more by her smile, her glance, than by tangible statement. Spina viewed Cesare Tommasi's new wife with suspicion as a stranger, yet chatted amicably with her all the same.

At nightfall Pia was found snugly ensconced with Marianna Cari, in the absence of her son. Travellers might arrive at the Black Eagle, and the widow would see how well Pia could aid her in serving them. These supposititious guests would imagine Pia had always been the *cameriera* of an inn: Pia was confident of that.

Cesare Tommasi shrugged his shoulders.

His wife was dissatisfied. "What has she got in her head now?" she muttered between her teeth.

"Eh! Pia has her own ways. She is a little original. Patience!" counselled Cesare, shambling home once more.

Emilia was pale, haggard, morose. She glanced about the shop, which was lighted by the feeble rays of the oil-lamp, with her hungry look ever seeking some object.

Cesare trimmed the lamp. If his daughter had whims, evidently

his new wife was not without them. Women are strange creatures, and not too reasonable. It may have further occurred to him that Emilia was lifting the mask a trifle. She was no longer the mild and humble slave who had met him at Pisa accidentally and first put the thought of marriage into his head. Occasionally she uttered impatient exclamations, when he was relating histories of his Roman experiences, the reverse of courteous. The nervous restlessness which belongs to her people manifested an increasing sway.

"We are poor folk up here," he said, as if addressing the lamp-flame. "It will be a good thing for Pia to marry."

Pia had won favor with Marianna Cari by her affectionate care, her wily promises, and the glowing pictures she drew of the future. Some fine day Masolino would come home rich, and he would take his mother away to drive in a large carriage and go to the theatre. Pia was sure of this matter. Guido would be required to make busts and statues for great people, and soon he would have all Carrara working for him. The widow laughed and wept, from force of habit, but she listened to these agreeable suggestions more leniently than formerly.

Pia made a surprising request. As the travellers had not arrived, she asked to be allowed to sleep in the guest-chamber of the Black Eagle. The amazed hostess consented. Pia crept into the bed last occupied by Dr. Weisenér. Her own impertinence exhilarated rather than dismayed her. The darkness closed about the couch, dense, almost palpable, but she had nothing to fear, for she had quietly locked the door. An instinct of prudence had warned her not to pass the night beneath the same roof with her step-mother. The night tells no tales. She rested in the state bed of the Aquila Nera, so sumptuous to her and so mean to the traveller, with a sensation of well-being that soothed her overwrought nerves to the quiescent state between sleeping and waking.

The darkness grew heavier, until it enclosed the little mortal like an enveloping pall, yet she saw, in this obscurity, the carved head above the shop door at the angle of the street. The head, no longer worn by storms and the years, but sharply defined, was that of an ass, and endowed with a vicious life and intelligence. The upper lip moved, and was raised, revealing strong teeth, the nostril quivered, and from the deep eye-sockets shot twin rays of light.

Pia moved and turned, and found herself standing before her father's door on the rough stones of the little street. A coldness and fear smote her, for a tall, pale shape brushed past her. She pressed her hands to her panting breast to gain courage, and looked before her. The shape was a nun, in hood and cloak, with bowed head and noiseless step. What was she doing there? The sister crossed the street to the detached building. The massive portal stood wide open. The nun entered, beckoning to the dwarf, who followed wonderingly.

Pia paused on the threshold, and looked in.

Her favorite nook, the long-dismantled convent buttery, was no longer recognizable.

At the farther extremity was an altar, adorned with a picture of the Madonna, where a priest in robes embroidered with gold and silver chanted the mass, while the incense curled up towards the ceiling.

Other hooded forms filled the place. The nun advanced, ascended the altar step, and turned to look again at Pia. The bell tinkled sharply, and the priest elevated the host. Pia, constrained by custom to kneel, remained rooted to the spot, for all those muffled phantoms also turned to her instead of to the altar, with folded hands, watching her from the depths of their hoods.

She opened her lips to cry out, and the clouds of incense rolled around her, stifling her with their perfume. She strove to pierce the mist, and could only discern the wavering tapers, and the Madonna of the altar in her blue mantle, with a glory around her head.

With a violent struggle to escape, Pia opened her eyes, and found herself in the state bed of the Black Eagle. The vision had been only a dream. Her brain was singularly clear. In her thoughts she followed Guido Cari along the dusty highway trodden by Masolino. She beheld him received by the duchess, amidst her friends, and the music and conversation interrupted, for a moment, to give him a hearing. The duchess would accord consent, with her gracious smile. Guido would stammer, blush, and withdraw. Sabina would greet Guido rapturously, and make the other servants believe that he was one of her lovers. Sabina must inevitably be a clever maid by this time, quick to learn, dainty and deft by nature in the arrangement of a lady's wardrobe, and revelling in an atmosphere of luxury. The *soubrette* would be capable of delivering a note in a bouquet to Madame the Baroness with the discretion of her class. Pia could comprehend all these things while tossing on her pillow. And Guido, the artist? Had she done him good, or evil, in sending him to gaze once more on the beauty of the duchess? Perhaps she had held a poisoned chalice to his lips. Ah! Our Lady of the shrines is pierced with the gilded arrows of many sorrows. The arrows rankling in human breasts pass unperceived by the world.

Two days later Pia entered her father's house, whither she had not returned in the interval. Triumphant joy twinkled in her little, beady eyes. She announced to the bewildered Cesare and his no less perplexed wife that the Duchess di Nespoli had purchased the opposite building for her to dwell in, thus giving her the wedding-dowry in another form.

Pia had thus intrenched herself behind the powerful protection of the duchess, in case of paternal opposition.

"*Domine Dio!*" ejaculated Cesare, who was mending a vase with cement.

"*Sanctissima Maria!*" echoed the step-mother. "Every one will say that I have driven you away, dear little one."

Pia wrinkled up her nose. "Two feet are not comfortable in one shoe," she retorted.

The Emilia lifted up both of her hands with a gesture of dismay.

Cesare sighed, and fitted a broken fragment into the vase.

"You would rather live alone than remain with your own father," he said, in an aggrieved tone.

"Eh! thistles make a poor salad," said Pia, tossing her head in the air. "The money would not have come to you, had I married."

She drew Guido Cari across the street, with an imperious gesture. "Here is your studio. Now you can make the statue," she said. He understood.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FRESCO OF THE WALL.

AUTUMN came to Spina, and the slopes of chestnut woods changed their summer green to yellow and brown. The lowlands still bloomed with flowers, blushed with the ripening peach, and garnered golden maize and pumpkins. Grapes hung in clusters of purple and white among the withered leaves of the vineyards, while figs tempted with their luscious abundance on every highway.

Spina, Spartan in poverty, gleaned none of these luxuries of field and vineyard. The town was fortunate if able to enjoy an occasional raw vegetable, a tuft of garlic, in the summer, or feast on a handful of chestnuts roasted in the ashes of an October evening.

The garden of the Villa Margherita had acquired the sad aspect of desertion. The shrubbery had withered, the roses drooped unplucked, and, save for a few richly-tinted plants of the season, the parterres had been stripped, to shelter delicate exotics in the vestibule and loggia. The fountain had ceased to play, and icicles fringed the basin on cold mornings. The peacock sought the warmest nooks of the terrace, and the goldfish swam about in the crystal globes within-doors which furnished their winter habitation. December succeeded, and the old people crept forth to warm themselves in the sun of the Piazza, exchanging confidences concerning rheumatic limbs. The children whimpered with cold and hunger. The faces of men hardened and grew wrinkled with care, and shoulders stooped beneath the burden of family needs.

The north wind, sweeping over the snow-capped Apennines, bringing sleet and rain in its train, meant want and misery at Spina. There was the Campo Santo, with the cluster of cypress-trees rising against the sky, as the end of it all. No swiftly-flowing Tiber or Arno tempted the harassed and the desperate to terminate the struggle, although there were high windows from which to spring, resort of hill cities, as Sabina Regaldi had suggested, beside the fountain.

In the detached building of the convent wall comparative tranquillity reigned. Pia, the dwarf, dwelt there. The room was her own, purchased with the money of her dowry. The maidens of Spina might sigh in unavailing regret, or pray that the duchess would repeat her gift another year. Pia kept her portion. She was independent.

The large door had opened for her tiny person as mistress. She was careful to slide the massive bolt and attach the chain, inspecting all comers through the adjacent grating before admitting them. Pia was not afraid, only she poured out the contents of the flasks of wine and water brought by her step-mother at the moment of her installation, even breaking the glass with stones afterwards. She distrusted the Emilia in all things.

In one corner of her new abode was placed her humble pallet,

protected by a screen covered with coarse paper. On the opposite side a brazier, an earthen pot, and a copper vessel served for the slender culinary requirements of the new household.

Cesare Tommasi had given his consent, but these arrangements filled him with apprehensions for the future. When Pia dismantled the terrace, managing to destroy those plants which she did not remove, he understood her determination to dwell apart. He missed her in the shop, where the articles were better arranged for the rare customers by her hand than by Emilia. Pia feigned not to perceive his uneasiness, while her jealous soul was secretly exultant. She liked to be missed,—to have her displeasure weigh as heavily as that of a larger person. The result would be worth the sacrifice.

Guido Cari had converted the end of the room into a studio. He worked all day on the statue of the Aurora, a task commenced with a sentiment of dreamy awe on the part of the sculptor.

Pia was extremely happy while watching him, realizing the certainty that but for her aid genius would not be able to spurn the chrysalis of a dull and hopeless routine and soar into the higher sphere of creative imagination. How could Guido labor without this chamber, where he was safe from intrusion? His very presence near was sufficient for herself. She believed in him,—oh, how ardently she believed in him! The tiny woman, perched on a stool, with her hands wrapped in an apron, or busily knitting, felt herself akin to Cimabue discovering the shepherd-lad Giotto drawing sheep on the rock with a bit of chalk, and Simone Vespucci, Podestà of San Savino, when he offered to send Andrea Contucci to Florence to receive instruction. The elation of the patron and the benefactor warmed her blood in the dreary cold of February, when the storm beat against the barred casements, insufficiently repaired with ill-fitting glass, lids of boxes, and strips of cloth.

The odd little hostess fed her guest, who accepted the frugal portion from her hand mechanically.

Occasionally she stole away to console and scold Marianna Cari, whose faith was as cold as her own hearthstone in these dreary days of bitter want.

Pia did not disdain to receive food from her father's table, which she afterwards shared with the widow and her son. The dwarf was exacting, even tyrannical. Guido yielded to her wishes, provided they did not touch his corner and the clay forming beneath his fingers. He ate as he was bidden, and went home to bed at night, making no confidences with his neighbors on the way. Pia delighted in the exercise of authority. She built air-castles all day, and Guido listened as one hears the bubble of a fountain mingling with one's own meditations. He lived in the present. Let the fulfilment come as it might, Bianca, Duchess di Nespoli, had blended inseparably with the Aurora, in his fancy. He shaped her image in the supple, yielding clay, now working with true frenzy to attain completion, and again lingering long over a fold of drapery, a dimple, a curve of flesh. At another moment he crushed together the whole form into a shapeless mass, stricken with sudden misgiving of his own incapacity to attain the desired result. Then he recommenced the task, adopting a new pose.

Pia followed his movements with absorbed attention. Cesare Tommasi came daily to look curiously at the statue and bewail the severity of the season. As a critic, old Cesare was a Laodicean, choosing a discreet coolness which would enable him to praise, or blame, later, as the tide turned in favor of the young sculptor, or the reverse. Emilia was also made welcome by her step-daughter, in that hollow truce which had been established between them. She scrutinized Guido with the puzzled speculation of an untrained mind incapable of divining results.

The woman from the Romagna was growing pale and thin. Irritability was rapidly usurping her calm and meek demeanor as a newly-arrived bride. Cesare Tommasi tasted the first bitterness of disillusionment of marked neglect. Emilia showed herself neither a careful housewife nor a clever assistant in making a bargain for the shop. She did not lavish on her aged husband those delicate cares to which Pia had accustomed him in the long years of their intimate companionship. The conversation of the old collector dealt much in ambiguous terms of reproach, enveloped in proverbial sayings on the treachery of human nature in general, and of wives in particular.

The fine flavor of such satire, so keenly appreciated and quickly assimilated by Pia, was lost on Emilia, whose wits were dull where her own interests were not vitally concerned. Alas for a honeymoon when the bride had been the most flattering of companions! She no longer heeded his requests and listened to his philosophical discussions on men and events. Sometimes she cut him short with a shrug of the shoulders and the exclamation *Che!* Her tone of voice was dry and sneering.

Cesare was deeply incensed at this lack of politeness, and too proud to confess his chagrin. He grew yellow with suppressed anger, and his nose acquired the sharpness of a parrot's beak.

Pia rubbed her hands together and sang little ditties expressive of her glee while watching Guido at work. The town of Spina warmed its chilled blood with laughter at the manifest discomfiture of Cesare Tommasi in his domestic affairs. Pia offered him no superfluous condolences, while her politeness to her step-mother acquired a mocking exaggeration.

Thus the winter passed, the spring once more put forth its fragrant blossoms of almond and apricot, and the June days returned to Spina.

Guido Cari stood with folded arms and contemplated his completed work. Should he urge some connoisseur to come and see the clay model? Should he keep it a secret from the world?

The young-man's cheeks were hollow and his eyes sunken. Pia noticed threads of silver in the masses of his black hair. All the rapture of creating he had ever known had been instilled into the hours and months spent in fashioning the statue. Was the work good? Perpetual misgiving, and the discontent of the artist soul, troubled him. He was incapable of decision. He could do no more. He was at the end of his forces. Such as it was, the Aurora must stand.

Aurora, with her filmy draperies flowing down to her feet, raised

her arms above her head, greeting the day with upturned gaze and smiling mouth.

Little Pia, swarthy, grim, human, stood at the base of the statue, and cried,—

"It is more beautiful than the angels, but it does not resemble *her*!"

She struck her breast with her hand, as if to deaden the pain of her own heart.

The Aurora was seraphic, ethereal, ideal, in the delicate purity of form, the contour of cheek and neck. Better so than belief that the duchess could be a creature of equal perfection!

Then commenced a period of waiting, when the sculptor awoke to daily expectation and trod the thorns of disappointment before night-fall.

How was the Aurora to be given form in the marble of Carrara? Ah, that was the dream of Guido Cari. His earthly hopes centred in this one fulfilment. He had never looked beyond.

Pia knew it, and secretly wrung her hands in an agony of prayer. Daily the quarries yielded blocks capable of granting the Aurora immortality in durability of form. If one could claim the marble!

Guido began to haunt the roads, the ravines, the workshops, like a demented creature. Sometimes he placed his hand caressingly on a snowy mass as it was dragged along by the gray oxen for shipment to foreign lands, longing to detain it on the spot for his own bitter need. Again he lay down on the ground and compassed with his arms a rudely-outlined shaft which would have so adequately served his purpose. There was not money enough in all Spina to purchase it, and one cannot steal Carrara marble. He was the human wave, feeble, powerless, beaten against this rock, yet ever returning for fresh defeat.

A rich patron was needed. Pia recalled the Duchess di Nespoli. The steward of the villa, Andrea Vanucci, had the address. The duke and duchess were in Paris, and intended later in the season to visit the Engadine. There was no hope of their repeating their visit to Spina.

Pia wrote one of her laborious letters, and implored the steward to forward it, which he did, with certain qualifications and excuses for himself in taking so great a liberty.

The duke replied, through his secretary, curtly and carelessly. The Ginestre needed no new statues, and could afford no patronage of rising artists. He did not add that he was negotiating the sale of a *Psyche*, at the moment, long treasured in the Roman palace as the gift of a pope. The spendthrift noble had more need of money than ever, and still owed Spina the grudge of having afforded him little.

Pretty Sabina, proud of her embroidered cap, neat collar, and smattering of French, had been asked by the duchess,—

"Would you like to return to Spina, my child, and marry the sculptor Guido Cari?"

"*Madre di Dio!* no, *cara Signora Duchessa*," cried Sabina, in unfeigned alarm. "Oh, don't send me back up there!"

The duchess smiled.

"He has talent, it seems," she added, musingly, and speaking with

the easy affability so characteristic of the intercourse of mistress and maid in Italy.

"He is like the rest, signora," returned Sabina. "His brother Masolino has more cleverness, and we hear nothing of him, *poverino*."

Then Sabina had placed on the head of the duchess a mantle of white Rapallo lace, attached by a cream-colored rose, and the lady had gone to an opening night at the Comédie Française.

Detraction was natural to Sabina, quick, jealous in temperament, and still piqued that Guido Cari had never noticed her own charms. She eyed the duchess, as the latter gathered up her scented gloves and fan and swept away, as a cat may scan a bird-of-paradise, a trifle dazzled by the golden plumage, yet marvelling wherein lies the difference between wings and furred feline claws.

The play was Victor Hugo's "Ruy Blas," and all that the capital could boast of wit, beauty, and fashion had flocked to do honor to the venerable poet author and a great actress.

The Duchess di Nespole forgot the humble sculptor of Carrara in contemplation of the stage queen. He was like the others, pert Sabina affirmed. How should the duchess, readily sympathetic and tender of heart, know any difference, when she had not even divined that the statue of the Aurora was wrought in her own image?

Pia, the dwarf, sharing the passionate unrest of the sculptor, could only counsel patience, while pondering night and day on a solution of the difficulty. She must adjust the matter.

"See, my little Guido, the statue shall be made," Pia would say, perched on her stool, with her eyes fixed on the shape hidden beneath wet cloths. "When the duchess returns home, I will go to her on my knees, and never quit her door until she has promised to aid us."

"She is too far away even to hear you," Guido would respond, in profound dejection. "The duke would only laugh at me. One can read that in his face. Ah, he is as proud as he is rich."

Pia sighed, then resumed:

"Bah! Courage, my Guido! When Antonio Fontana was given the order to make the statues for the church of San Celso, the deputies of the commission lent him a block of marble on security. If the duchess fails, we will make the same bargain with one of the studios of Carrara. Eh! the traveller who always fears the clouds will never take a journey."

The wise little woman rubbed her chin, with a sly expression. There must be a cord which would move these puppets of her will. She would seek until she discovered this cord. Leave her alone for that.

The practical suggestion jarred strangely on the organization of Guido. To bargain with the marble-cutters for the Aurora seemed a sacrilege. Why? The feverish exaltation which had upheld him for months had expended its force in creating the ideal shape, and inevitable reaction succeeded. He glanced contemptuously at Pia. Her parrot-note of perpetual suggestion and encouragement irritated him. Nay, had not the flattery of her devotion to his works prepared him to receive only praise from others?

The steward came, and looked at the statue, in company with the village priest. These judges found the Aurora very large,—quite a bold flight, indeed, for the widow Cari's son. Much marble would be required for its execution.

Cesare Tommasi, moved by the eloquence of his daughter, agreed to write a letter to a certain dealer at Rome, who might be tempted to buy the work, or at least advance the requisite amount to put it into marble.

Emilia waxed derisive with delay. Her eyes glittered with a strange light, and her mouth twisted into an evil smile.

"Where will you get your marble?" she demanded of Pia, tauntingly.

Pia made no response. In this lively manifestation of her step-mother's malice she read revenge at her own escape from the paternal roof, taking her dowry with her. Each day the dwarf wrote a letter, more wild and bold in its entreaty, to the duchess, to come and see the statue, to send some word of encouragement to the sculptor.

The despondency of Guido and the sneers of Emilia maddened Pia. The letters were taken to the steward. Andrea Vanucci received them, shook his head, also counselled patience, and laid them, one by one, in his desk. He had promised the haggard little suppliant to send the missives to the duchess. *Altro!* So he would do, on fitting occasion, but he was a prudent man, and the world is full of eager competitors. He did not wish to endanger his position with the duke by presenting the clamorous petitions of all Spina for assistance.

Each day Pia drove forth Guido to make overtures for aid with his former colleagues.

The master of the studio received him gruffly. Guido had been too long a renegade to hope for other greeting. Workmen were plentiful. Let Guido Cari learn his place. The padrone, still angry at his defection, openly ridiculed his superior pretensions, and bade him go to the devil. He did not confess that he missed the clever hand, the innate artistic perception, the unswerving industry, which had always characterized the young marble-cutter. His code had been to extort the utmost tithe of labor for the least remuneration. The defection of Guido had been felt, and now it was his opportunity. He watched the youth knock at the other doors, where he had forestalled him. If he did not work for him, Guido should serve no other. The padrone would see to that. *Altro!* He did not believe too much in the statue, although he promised himself to look at it, some time, when Guido should have suffered sufficient humiliation.

How seldom do the masters divine the ability of the pupils, or, in perceiving, aid, rather than thwart, a natural development!

A gloomy sky hung over the town, marking a changeable atmosphere, and the sirocco blew in fierce gusts from the sea, sending clouds of dust through the streets. The Carrara heights appeared pallid and gray in hue, then darkened to purple, as the clouds grew dense with threatened rain.

Pia sat in her new abode, awaiting the return of Guido Cari from one of his journeys in search of aid. No response had come to her

letters; old Cesare Tommasi had commenced to croak prophecies of failure, while the witticisms of Emilia, so easily degenerating into calumny, circulated around the town. Pia hoped that none of the idle gossip had reached the scornful and impatient ear of the sculptor. Discouragement oppressed the valiant soul of the little woman; the sirocco tingled in all her veins. Seeking an object on which to expend sheer physical irascibility, she could have fallen on her step-mother and silenced forever her false tongue.

How many excesses of crime are to be attributed to the African wind, sweeping from the brazen heat of the desert, uncooled by the Mediterranean Sea, in the land of the sun!

Pia leaned her head against the wall, and closed her eyes. The door was bolted, for she kept vigilant guard over the statue in the absence of Guido.

A thousand wild fancies tortured her brain. Unprotected, she saw the curious crowd of townsfolk pressing in to gape at the Aurora, with coarse jest and unappreciative eye. Unprotected, she beheld the woman from the Romagna stealing along the wall, with an evil laugh, to mar the patient labor of months. These were all against the artist, because he was different from the common herd. The instinct of hostility, in mediocrity, to superiority is everywhere the same. Spina shared it with Rome or Paris.

The clouds grew more sombre, until they formed a blue-black curtain of vapor across the entire horizon, with a ragged white fringe at the zenith. Thunder rolled with a slow and solemn reverberation, and a flash of lightning pierced the gloom of the building, with its solitary occupant.

Suddenly Pia became aware that she was not alone. Her dry lips parted, her flesh grew cold with a sense of awe rather than of fear; the hair stirred on her head. The tall and white form of the nun again troubled her. Stay! the whiteness was that of a shadow, for Pia distinctly realized that the mysterious visitor wore the black robe, with the coif and veil, of the Augustinian order.

The shape glided quickly from the door to the extremity of the room, and vanished in the rear of Guido's statue, swathed in damp cloths.

The reality of this presence was so vivid, so tangible, that Pia crept to the same spot, expecting to confront the nun. The place was empty.

"It was a spirit," a voice seemed to whisper in her heart rather than in her ear.

For the first time a panic of terror seized Pia. Superstition lent additional dread to mere stupid surprise. What was Guido's statue, in its swarthy envelope of linen, but another ghost, menacing in its very immobility? She called aloud for help, and sought the door, which she unfastened with trembling haste. Human companionship was better than darkness and loneliness. She succeeded in opening the door.

The wind came with violence up the slope, and the rain flooded the floor. The thunder again crashed overhead, and the lightning sparkled

with a green phosphorescence, as singular as it was blinding, on the fountain, and on the carved head above the shop of Cesare Tommasi.

Between stood Emilia and Guido Cari. The woman from the Romagna, indifferent to the storm which beat upon her unprotected hair and shoulders, greeted Guido:

"Good-evening, Signore *Scultore*. You are back early to-night. When will the marble be ready, I pray you, and the duchess see herself as a heathen goddess? The duke will be pleased, I promise!"

Guido vouchsafed no reply. His face was very pale, and in his eyes burned a sombre fire. He thrust back his wet hair and entered the building which had become his studio, putting Pia aside to close the door.

Again the dwarf felt that cold pulsation of fear sweep over her. The hours were charged with dangerous elements; the moments were ebbing to some vague and terrible culmination.

"You are wet and tired, Guido," she managed to articulate. "We must have some supper."

Her tongue cleaved to the roof of her mouth; she leaned against the wall for support; her feet remained rooted to the spot.

Guido did not heed her words. He glanced about him with a dazed and weary expression.

"Her portrait!" he muttered, in accents of concentrated bitterness. "The duke would strike me in the face, perhaps. Never! never!"

"Guido!" cried Pia, dragging herself to his side.

He shook her off so violently that she fell against the screen. Restraint, even of her touch, moved him to frenzy. With one bound he threw himself on the statue, wrenched away the covering, and overturned it. The dismantling of the cherished task proving insufficient, he hacked the clay to pieces. The deed was quickly accomplished, as are most destructive efforts. He spurned the crumbled mass with his foot and hurled the iron support far from him. All was finished. He contemplated the result with a bewildered stupidity, as Cain may have looked on the slain Abel.

The wind once more shook the door, and the rain drifted in across the threshold. Guido Cari was gone, and it was night.

Pia remained where she had been flung against the screen. Stunned, bruised, she did not wholly lose consciousness. She heard the blows of the sculptor on the model and the heavy thud of the fallen clay. Then all was silent, and she felt that she was alone. She wondered vaguely where Guido had gone and when he would return. The dial of her daily life had come to mark only these events of his movements.

She never knew how long a time she remained there under the leaden weight of an indefinable misery which was akin to insensibility.

Nobody entered the place, and the storm ceased. At length she rose, lighted the oil-lamp, and approached the spot, fearfully, so long dedicated to Guido Cari and his work.

In the obscurity of the lofty room she resembled a gnome guided by the will-o'-the-wisp to some scene of mortal passion and folly.

Pia climbed over the clay, and the very contact reassured her. On the morrow Guido must cement it together and recommence the task.

The Aurora was stamped on his brain as an intaglio is engraved on a gem. The overturned model did not dismay her for the moment. She recognized the fact that Guido was following the path trodden by all sculptors, imitating the objects about him in a rudimentary state, and then, with the art-faculty spiritualized in fuller development, longing to personate beauty of which he caught only imperfect glimpses.

Ah, how much worse the mischief might have been had the clay been already fused into brittle plaster! In her own imagination she beheld Guido grinding the plaster to powder beneath his heel.

The iron support of the statue had fallen against the wall. The feeble hand of the dwarf in dislodging it drew a furrow in the smooth white surface with a sharp end. The iron fell on the floor with a dull clang. Pia's quick eye observed the furrow traced on the wall. She picked up a knife from the *débris* and scraped the plaster. A gleam of gold and colors sparkled in the lamp's flickering ray.

There was a fresco beneath the coat of whitewash on the long-dismantled convent wall.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A PYGMY.

WHEN Pia realized the discovery she had made, a sudden joy filled her heart.

In her own mind she associated her two dreams of the nun with finding the fresco. What were these dreams but apparitions? She glanced over her shoulder, half dreading to behold again the tall shadow of the sister. Then she fell on her knees and uttered a short prayer. Ah, the picture on the wall might save them all, if it was in perfect preservation! Pia knew enough of the art of her country to appreciate the possibility of such good fortune.

Her prayer became a sort of trance of ecstasy in which she attained the fulfilment of her sole ambition. The fresco would be removed and sold. Guido's statue could be remodelled and converted into marble as he desired. The money given for the fresco would suffice to pay for the block of marble, or, at least, guarantee a loan for the remainder of the sum.

In the bare chamber of the convent Pia enacted over again the merchant scheming for the contents of his tray of porcelain in the Oriental bazaar, and Pierrette with her brimming jug of milk. A glimpse of color visible beneath the whitewash of the wall had set her pulses throbbing with eager expectation. She had closed her eyes and thrown back her head in the absorption of her supplication and swayed her little body as her lips moved rapidly. Her blue apron caught in the lamp's flame placed near her on the ground, thus recalling her to the present. She tore the apron from the fastening about her waist, crushed the burning fragment boldly in her hands, and threw it among the *débris* of clay.

The accident restored her usual calmness and caution. She blew out the lamp, quitted the place, and locked the door behind her. No one must discover her secret, in her absence.

Her spirits were already lighter respecting Guido. She made a fantastic reverence to the carved head above the shop door, as she crossed the street.

"Tell me, little *asinello*, do you mean the picture? Was I to find it?" she murmured.

It was one of those moments when a creature, however insignificant, believes in the greatness of destiny. Pia's soul towered above all Spina.

The house of Cesare Tommasi was strangely silent and dark. Pia tried the shop door, which yielded to her touch, and she penetrated the interior. Scarcely had she entered, when a person rushed past her, with a smothered exclamation, and, gaining the street, disappeared.

Pia had shrunk under a table, and a flying dress whipped her face. She did not speak, nor attempt to detain the other, with the instinct of creatures that withdraw into their shell, or, rolled in a ball, feign death, in the presence of danger.

Pia waited, and no sound announced the return of the unseen fugitive. Then the daughter of the house, familiar with every object, groped her way through the shop to the living-rooms beyond. She was troubled; apprehension weighed on her. A cold fear made her limbs tremble and her teeth chatter. She found a match-box on a certain shelf, struck a light, and inspected, with mingled rage and regret, the domain from which a usurper had driven her.

The furniture bore evidence of confusion and disorder. A struggle had taken place. Boxes were overturned, and their contents lay scattered on the floor; drawers were half open, chairs upset and broken.

"Daddy!" Pia called, softly.

There was no response.

She held the lamp above her head, and advanced. She had steadied her trembling nerves, by an effort of will, to learn the worst. She was alone, and there was nobody to take her place. True, she might call the neighbors; but Pia had never liked public interference in her own affairs. She listened intently. She peered among the shadows with her keen little eyes. She drew her breath with a shuddering gasp, and said,—

"*Padre mio*, where are you?"

A feeble groan issued from the corner of Cesare Tommasi's bed-chamber. The old dealer lay there in a heap, still vaguely fighting the air, as if to restrain a furious enemy.

"He's dead! The woman from the Romagna has killed him!" Pia uttered these words aloud, with a terrible sense of conviction in their truth, but she glanced around the walls, as if she feared to be overheard by the object of her dread.

Cesare was not dead, however. He was not even seriously injured, although his face acquired a set expression which never again left it. Spina always dated the stroke which paralyzed the remainder of his days to this time. It was a stroke, the old people affirmed, in which the second wife had played some very important part. The old people never doubted that fact.

"She must be a devil," he stammered, when he realized the presence of his daughter; and he spoke no more that night.

Pia, having assured herself that Emilia was not lurking on the premises, barred the door. Then she raised her father's head, by placing a pillow on the floor, and unfastened his black silk cravat, which was oddly twisted awry under one ear, as if by the cruel grasp of the strong white fingers which Pia had often watched with a sentiment of strange aversion. She sought that unfailing remedy of the Italian household, the flask of vinegar, mingled a small quantity with water, and bathed her parent's face. Next she poured a little wine between his lips. Cesare sighed, as if contented with her presence.

Satisfied with these results, she began to rearrange the disorder of the interior as best she could. Her will was powerful, if her body was weak. She gathered up the scattered boxes first.

The Emilia had searched the entire house, with a recklessness which defied discovery and other results. What had she found? Little of value, for the reason that no articles of worth were hidden here. Cesare Tommasi might have acquired a reputation for hoarding wealth under the tiles of the floor or in the secret drawers of cabinets, but his daughter was fully aware that there was none to hoard.

Her task of investigation accomplished, Pia returned to her father, took his cold hand, and kissed his forehead. There was in this caress a complete reconciliation. Pia was at his side, as formerly, to take care of him, shrewd wit aiding where physical strength was lacking. In her heart she scorned the aged bridegroom, brought to so pitiable a pass by the temper of his wife. Did she not know, could she not have foretold, that the meek and cringing Emilia came to Spina only for interested motives, other than the safe refuge of a home?

Hours passed in the lonely vigil, with Cesare Tommasi supported by pillows and coverings on the floor, and Pia watching beside him. Each moment she dreaded to hear Emilia's voice begging for admittance at the barred portal. She was determined to remain deaf to such appeals. The key of her own house was safe in her pocket. Thus she waited, trembling at every gust of the night wind.

A suspicion came to Pia with the dawn. Ah, how stupid she had been not to have thought of it before! She rose from her seat, and opened the wardrobe where Emilia kept the modest black gown and shawl in which she had arrived as a bride. How Pia had hated the raiment because of the wearer!

The gown and shawl were no longer in their accustomed place. Even the detestable straw bonnet, with the flaunting flowers, had disappeared.

What did it mean? Had she actually gone away? Pia clasped her hands and breathed a sigh of relief, with a dramatic gesture of delight.

The woman from the Romagna had been the creature who rushed forth when Pia entered her father's door to communicate the wonderful intelligence concerning her discovery of a fresco on the convent wall.

Outside, the storm had passed, the clouds gradually cleared away, and the stars shone out above Spina, enveloped in the black shadow of the tall houses.

Two people had left the town, ignorant of each other's movements, and hastened away in opposite directions. Guido Cari was seeking the heart of the Carrara mountains, obeying an instinct more powerful than human reason. Emilia Tommasi, otherwise a foundling of the Innocents' Hospital, was fleeing towards the plain, disappointment baffling her wild exultation in freedom.

Pia was aroused from stupor by a resounding knocking at the shop door. She discovered that she had fallen asleep beside her parent, and it was full day. She must have slept for hours.

She uttered a feeble cry of protest against the peremptory summons. Old Cesare, with pale and rigid features, looked at her apprehensively, as if disturbed by the same fear, and his eyelids trembled.

"Courage, daddy," said Pia, recovering herself. "She shall not touch you! I will tell the Fra Antonio and the steward. Let the Emilia beware! We have the carabinieri up here when they are needed."

Uttering these valiant words, she approached the door, slid the panel of a little grating, and inspected the applicant, before opening, in the cautious, national fashion.

Two men had just descended from a little wagon, the one lean and vulpine in type, and the other corpulent and rosy, with shrewd eyes twinkling in a round countenance.

Pia recognized the lean and vulpine man. He was the Roman connoisseur summoned by Cesare Tommasi to judge of the merits of Guido Cari's statue, and aid in its execution, if interested in the project. The model was in a state of ruin, the sculptor absent, old Cesare helpless, but Pia did not despair. Fortunately, the fresco remained to be uncovered, and these strangers would know more concerning the actual merit of it than all Spina. She pressed her hand to her brow for a moment, reflecting intently, and bit her lip. Then she lowered the chains and slid back the bolts, welcoming the new-comers, a quaint little figure on the threshold. She sent them on to the Black Eagle to obtain refreshment, and summoned in three strong men to lift her father on his bed.

Pia made suitable explanation to these curious neighbors while they were thus employed. Cesare Tommasi had certainly suffered a stroke during the night, owing to some quarrel, and his wife had run away. It was fortunate Cesare had not fallen a victim to the "fulminating apoplexy" which is of such frequent occurrence instead, Pia gravely affirmed, as she smoothed the counterpane. The neighbors stared and wondered.

Nimble extricating herself from all difficulties, she utilized the forces about her in this emergency. Sabina's mother, full of sympathy, was installed beside the couch of Cesare, in the absence of his daughter. Pia went and came, swiftly, arranging matters in her own fashion.

When the two strangers had finished their meal and returned to the shop, they found Pia awaiting them before the door of the convent building, with the key in her hand. Her face was pallid and haggard with fatigue, her hair dishevelled, but in her eyes shone a light of triumph.

She was not alone. She had summoned the priest, the good-natured steward, Sandro the cobbler, and all who would come. Pia trusted no one, least of all the business-men from the world of the plain. Many witnesses were needed.

The key grated in the lock, the door opened, and Spina pressed into the chamber which had acquired the charm of mystery during the past winter. Spina marvelled at the barren interior.

Exclamations of wonder became merged into a cry of dismay:

"The statue has fallen! The arms and head are broken! What a misfortune!"

"The statue is nothing," said Pia, hoarsely, and her lips grew white. "Guido will make it over again. Have no fear! Look here, signore."

She approached the wall, dreading to find that the magical traces of the previous night had vanished. Spina stared, bewildered and stupefied. The strangers, the priest, and the steward followed her movements with attention.

Pia found the furrow, scored by the iron, in the plaster, and pointed to the colors visible beneath.

"It is a fresco," she proclaimed, triumphantly.

"Ah! an altar-picture, probably," added the thin collector, without any manifestation of surprise.

The fat Fra Antonio was visibly moved by this astonishing discovery. He endeavored to reach Pia and make some warning admonition behind the backs of these interlopers. The dwarf, feigning not to perceive these overtures, kept on the other side of the dealers. She pulled the coat of the lean and vulpine man.

"The place belongs to me. The Signora Duchessa let me have it. You will help me to uncover the fresco?" she entreated, in her most persuasive tone.

"Be tranquil, little one," replied the lean man, patting her head with a gesture which signified protection. He, also, understood the situation.

Spina had not eyes enough with which to gaze, nor ears adequate to receiving the words of the new-comers, whose advent had been too opportune to admit of the supposition that their coming was accidental. What did it mean, Pia Tommasi finding a picture on the wall, hidden away beneath the plaster? Surely the fresco could not be the treasure so long watched by the stone head opposite? No, no! Spina was not prepared to accept such a tame solution of a fascinating riddle. Pia had a lucky face. She had been warned to take the place. The last comer, loitering about the door, had the tale from Marianna Cari. A sister had appeared to Pia in the night. Was the nun Santa Monica in person? The town began to stare at Pia with new respect, transferring public interest to her.

In the mean while the two strangers were scraping off the white-wash of the wall, carefully yet rapidly. They worked with ardor, sharing the excitement and enthusiasm of the spectators. As the mask of plaster yielded to their efforts, Spina linked together souvenirs, with a word, a suggestion, here and there. It is easy to recall circumstances, to rebuild histories, when furnished the requisite clue.

The steward's wife remembered having heard the late Count di Ginestra speak of the first abbess of the convent as stern in rule and having treated a nun with much severity in her time. Thus stimulated by conjugal example, the steward was able to supplement the item that among the count's papers was one referring to the existence of a family of influence which had sought Spina in time of trouble, when commonwealth plotted against commonwealth in the valleys and invading armies despoiled cities, and dwelt in the house above the gate. The daughter of this family had espoused a religious life in the adjacent convent, building and decorating a chapel with her dower-money.

Here the consecutive narrative abruptly ceased, even as a flight of steps is sometimes disclosed amidst the ruins of an obliterated citadel, on the side of a cliff, the very stones held in place by clinging shrubbery, while below are

Desert caves, with wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown.

Spina could adorn the tradition with flowers of fancy, but was unable to cement the steps to the original threshold of fact.

The nun had disappeared, whether by means of death or of flight none could now decide, and all trace of her existence had been destroyed, even to the dismantling of the chapel, and the effacing of the altar fresco by means of plaster.

Fra Antonio, with the expression of one who knows more than he sees fit to reveal, added,—

“The chapel was a votive offering.”

The fresco, spurning the veil of outer covering which had so long concealed it, became gradually visible to all eyes. The work, executed on a brick foundation, was in a state of unusually good preservation, while the figures showed the grouping of a master.

The Madonna, seated, with a globe, entwined by a serpent, beneath her feet, supported the Christ-Child on her knee. Judith, Esther, and Ruth stood beside her in a devotional attitude. A nun of the Augustinian order knelt in the foreground, according to the custom of the giver of a votive picture. The blue robe of the mother, the yellow tunic of the child, and the draperies of the attendant holy women were alike undimmed by the ravages of moisture and years.

The fat stranger stepped back a pace, used his clinched hand as a lorgnette, and whispered in the ear of his colleague,—

“Hist! Ghirlandajo.”

Pia heard him. Could it be possible that Spina, unadorned by the mosaic of Venice, Ravenna, and Sicily, had found, instead, the natural vehicle of Florentine expression in fresco at the hand of the artist who sighed to cover the entire circuit of walls of his city with his own elaborate designs?

The dwarf scrutinized, half fearfully, the kneeling figure of the nun in the foreground of the altar-picture. Was this the shadowy shape which had haunted her dreams? No. The whisper went about among the women that Pia had surely been visited by Santa Monica in person.

"You will buy the fresco?" she inquired of the Roman dealer, intense eagerness betrayed by her look and gesture. "Eh! strong glue must be spread on the surface, and cloth attached, fold after fold, until, with the aid of heat, the thin section of wall can be removed. Is it not true? Then you will sell the work to some museum, or gallery, for much more money than you pay me."

She made a droll grimace, and turned her head on one side to look up at the stranger who held her fate in his hands.

The latter frowned.

"Not so fast, little one," he replied. "The fresco may be worthless, and I am a poor man."

The steward and the priest conferred apart.

"The little one's right may be disputed. Who knows?" said the priest, in a tone of authority.

"She goes too fast," assented the steward, testily.

Pia watched her opportunity to draw the steward aside.

"Signore Fattore, you must help me," she whispered, in a voice of softest cajolery. "If you keep these strangers from cheating me, the third of the price shall belong to you. Think of the children! If any try to rob me of my rights, I will appeal to the duchess. Let us be friends in the matter, Andrea Vanucci."

The steward was a reasonable man. Better to receive a third of the proceeds than to have no rights in the matter. He decided that the claim of Cesare Tommasi's daughter was a just one.

Pia screamed shrilly. The fat man had picked up an arm from the *débris* of Guido's statue and was examining it critically. The act struck the loyal little guardian of the spot as a desecration. She sprang forward, with flashing eyes and crimson cheeks.

"Do not touch it, until he comes back. Oh, where is he?" she cried, piteously.

But Guido did not return.

CHAPTER IX.

A BLOCK OF CARRARA MARBLE.

GUIDO CARI, in quitting the chapel and the town, had fled away from his own work of destruction. The model, broken, and lying in fragments at his feet, had brought no regret to his brain or his heart, where suffering was benumbed. Patient to a certain limit of endurance, he now threw all hope to the winds, and suffered every mad impulse, long pent up, to riot unrebuked in his nature. The fever of despair, in reaction, drove him forth from the scene of ruin, as a murderer may shun the spot dyed with the blood of his crime.

He ran until he had put hill and valley between himself and Spina. The familiar roofs and towers of the little town clustered on the rock had become hateful to him.

He had forgotten the faithful Pia. Indeed, it was fortunate for the dwarf that she did not stand in his path and oppose him with her customary arguments of cheerful encouragement. Remonstrances would have added fire to the flame already consuming him.

The ruined shrine, where he had encountered Masolino, rose in the shadow of the roadside. He paused there to rest, crouched on the step, and with his head supported on his hands. What had become of Masolino? What were the words uttered by Cesare Tommasi's wife? He could no longer repeat them, but the sting of look and gesture remained. Thought became confused; his brain was light. The darkness seemed peopled with faces, watching him derisively, their eyes full of curiosity and malevolence, like those of the woman from the Romagna.

The tall and haughty Duke di Nespole, the duchess, smiling in her tender grace, the sprightly baroness, had once traversed this road, but it was a long time ago; perhaps in another life.

The youth of Guido Cari had shrivelled and vanished in the crucible of the past few months.

These mocking shapes goaded him on. He rose and chose a branching path leading to the heart of the hills.

The access of fury in which he had broken the statue was passing, leaving a sensation of dull oblivion. He no longer recalled the act with the first thrilling agony of pain and triumph in the deed. He had left all behind him, with the fast-vanishing walls and roofs of Spina. A criminal will sometimes sleep soundly after the perpetration of a misdeed.

Daring impulse did not bridge circumstance and place him at the feet of the duchess to drink deep of the beauty of her eyes. He had dreamed of again beholding her, but now the hope was quenched. The living woman had become merged in the statue of his own creation, and the Aurora was shattered. That was the end; yet

When vain desire at last, and vain regret,
Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
What shall assuage the unforgetten pain,
And teach the unforgetful to forget?

"Ecco il mio destino!" said Guido Cari.

The quarries drew him to their precincts, as if by a spell. A haunting longing, an unsatisfied quest, began to torment him. Marble of Carrara had become to him the supreme Might Have Been of a blasted career. He wished to see and touch the marble.

Such was the fierce conflict, the torture of disappointment, mingled with fresh anxiety, which had driven Guido and Emilia from Spina in the night when the sirocco blew, bringing the tempest of thunder, lightning, and rain sweeping over the bosom of the leaden sea. Two beings, widely dissimilar in character and purpose, had gone forth into the darkness, spurning the shelter of the home roof, and straining at the curbing chain of routine until the links yielded and each was free.

Guido Cari, previously caught up in a whirlwind of artistic exaltation, had been dropped to earth, spent in the struggle. Emilia, grovelling for gain, had been rendered desperate by failure to grasp more money and increase her hoard. She left the old nook of the hill-top, as certain birds of ill repute flap forth on heavy wing from a ruined turret, uttering a harsh note of defiance.

The course of the man and of the woman might have been changed had they awaited the development of another day.

With morning light the slaves of Carrara resumed their customary toil.

These passed and repassed a man stretched on the ground, who idly watched their movements. The loiterer was Guido Cari, of Spina, known to many of their number. Sabina Regaldi's father gave him a preoccupied salutation. He had received notification of a tax which he had no means to pay. He scarcely heeded the youth without family cares, who was wasting his time instead of working. *Altro!* Each must bear his own troubles in this world. Thus reasoned Vittorio Regaldi.

The vines sloped below, down to the brink of the lowlands; above, the mountain-sides appeared scarped and scored by the industry of man through the lapse of centuries.

The sole music of the region was the occasional note of the warning horn, succeeded by an explosion of the shattered rock, awakening all the echoes, and the monotonous chipping of the chisel on the stone, in the interval of comparative stillness. The heavy carts, drawn by the teams of oxen, creaked along the rough path. The workers did not heed Guido Cari too much. Sometimes a child paused to stare at him, and ran away if he moved.

When a sledge thus laden passed, he fixed his eyes on it as long as it remained in sight, but he made no frantic effort to check its progress or question its destination, with a hungry longing to detain, as on a former occasion. The tide was too strong for him. The current had tossed him aside, exhausted, broken.

The slaves of the mines passed on their way, some to be suspended by ropes over the cliffs and drill little holes in the surface for the insertion of the tin tube containing nitric acid and gunpowder as agents of destruction, and others to fashion patiently the mass, once unearthed, in the adjacent studios.

Every blast of the drill wrecked precious portions of the marble, in hopeless disfigurement, as great disasters mar countless lives.

Guido sought in his pocket, inspired by the animal instinct of hunger. Ah, wise little Pia had not failed him! A morsel of bread remained of the portion which she had placed there the previous day. He ate the bread slowly, and left the spot. In moving he turned his face in the direction of one of the large quarries. Was he aware that a block of rare purity had been detached up there? How should he know? What difference could it have made had he known? He might have thrown himself on the cold marble and saluted it, but he could not have held it for his own. Oh, no! they would have torn the block from him, and dragged it away for shipment down to the sea. The certainty of such a fate no longer maddened him, as it would have done yesterday. The Aurora had faded from his mind, leaving a blank void.

Through all the years, through countless ages, the block of Carrara marble had waited up there, treasured in the quarry, for Guido Cari. Lustrous ornament of bath and vestibule for the Cæsars, fit material to

embody Pisa's cathedral and tower, as a seaport, with streets thronged by a motley crowd of Turks, Parthians, and other "monsters of the sea," as described by the old chronicler, shrine of art of every nation, still this one fragment had belonged to the humblest son of the soil. Nature, in subtle process of accretion, had prepared it for him.

The scene of labor stirred a vague sentiment of interest in his breast. What was it all to him? Nothing. He had ceased to associate the spot and the traffic with himself. The marble pleased his eye, as the sun sparkled on the freshly-cut surfaces, which appeared crystallized. He picked up a fragment and rubbed it softly between his palms.

The greatest artist can conceive of naught
That does not lie within a block of marble.

"*Ecco il mio destino!*" The words of the dying Murat, sometime King of Naples, escaped Guido's lips unconsciously.

To seek the studio where he had worked for so many years, was another phase of his despair. He stood in the door for a long time, with folded arms, and contemplated the labor of his former comrades, in various stages of completion.

"Are you coming back to us, Guido?" inquired stalwart Beppo, with the crisp black hair, ruddy cheeks, and bare arms.

Guido made no reply. He smiled faintly. In his own mind he had always compared Beppo with the youthful Bacchus, vine-crowned. He was too weary, too listless, for speech. He nodded silently in response to their greeting.

Beppo and his mates believed that he had returned to obtain work, humbled by poverty and repentant for his long absence. It is often like that with one who would place himself above his fellows, they reasoned.

Guido, ignorant of this verdict, or indifferent to it, pondered on the change which had come over him since he wielded the chisel here, singing and whistling the while. A dull weight was gradually settling on his heart. Something had happened up at Spina, but he could not recall the precise nature of the disaster.

The master perceived him, and came forward with bluff good humor. Early in the morning two strangers from Rome had passed his door, driving a little wagon, their destination Spina. A cautious inquiry about Guido Cari and the mention of Cesare Tommasi had aroused the padrone's suspicions and interest. Conviction smote him that they had come to see the model of Guido's statue. There was actually a statue, then? He hailed the approach of the young man as opportune.

He placed his hands on Guido's shoulders.

"I was about to seek you, boy," he said, in a friendly tone. "Have a drop of wine from this flask. I may use your model. Who knows?"

He filled a glass with red wine, and gave it to the passive Guido.

"Now let us hear more about the statue. It is an Aurora, if I remember right."

Thus spoke the padrone, pouring out for himself a second glass,—

a man not averse to the fruits of the vintage, as his bulbous nose, deep color, and plethoric person testified.

Guido gazed at him with slowly-dilating eyes, and dropped the glass on the ground. The next moment he threw his arms above his head, and disappeared in the direction of the quarries.

"His brain has turned with folly," muttered the padrone, contemplating the broken glass and spilled wine angrily. "Let him go!"

The statue of Aurora. That was it! The master had given the clue to a clouded mind. But the Aurora was destroyed. In one awful flash of swift revelation the artist saw the convent chapel, and the heap of clay crumbling at his feet. The offer came too late!

He sped along the most secluded path, like one pursued by remorse. At times he flung himself on the ground, with his face pressed among the flowers and leaves, repeating the words that the statue was lost. He could not impress the gravity of the ruin on his own mind, strive as he would to do so. The sentence flowed from his lips at his bidding, but failed to penetrate his soul. He was returning to the quarries for an answer. He was dazed. It seemed to him that they were all holding to his parched lips a cup when he could not drink. The hours passed, and he went on, with fitful pauses for communing with self, and wild rushes forward, as an escape from these efforts at reasoning.

The block of Carrara marble would leave the quarry that day. The slaves had toiled early and late for such consummation. Already the mass had quitted its place, and been lowered down the mountain-side to the next ledge, by means of ropes, and the wooden supports, soaped to avoid friction.

Guido Cari had gained the ravine, and flung himself down to rest. Sudden despair chilled his spirit. The events of the past twenty-four hours began to take shape, without painful exertion of memory. The padrone of the studio would be willing to aid him in executing the statue in marble. Ah, at last! But the clay model had been hacked to pieces by the blows of a madman.

"The Aurora is gone!" he cried aloud, springing once more to his feet.

His voice was strangely prolonged by the reverberating echo of the hill.

He turned his face towards the mountains, and saw the mass poised far above. With clearest vision, while the thronging shadows of the dead artists of countless generations, who had here sought the needful medium of expression, pressed close about him, he beheld the Aurora in the block, as if imprisoned in a translucent prison. The features of the goddess were austere in their dazzling purity of contour, the slender arms uplifted implored release of a master's chisel, the rounded form, veiled in chaste folds of drapery, acquired a vivid overwhelming distinctness, at once divine and terrible in majestic beauty. The statue was no longer his work, Guido Cari of Spina, but the sublime embodiment of Art, the sylvan spirit of the mountain-world. The veil of coarser sense was rent away, and in the one supreme flash of wonder, pain, and surprise the young sculptor knew and understood.

The thronging shadows of the dead artists had thus beheld her, the

Carrara nymph, in their day. In the future what power of genius will be able to lure her, in hitherto undreamed-of loveliness, from the innermost sanctuary of her temple of the hills?

Mechanically, Guido covered his face with his hands for a moment, and glanced towards the sea. Life, sweet, strong, intoxicating, pulsed back to his heart.

What cloud was rising over the waters?

A trailing mist, tinged with the rose of sunset; a veiled form, with arms uplifted to greet another day; a face which, in smiling, had rounded the cycle of a lifetime. Here was the ideal perfection lacked by clay model and living features. Here was shining vapor more radiant in purity than the stored wealth of the mountain. Bianca di Nespole appeared before him.

Joyful and incredulous, Guido advanced, and stretched forth his hands. As he did so, the prolonged note, previously blended with his own voice, again floated through the ravine. It was the peal of the quarryman's horn, warning of impending danger.

The block of Carrara marble, moving with the net-work of ropes and wooden supports, hung poised far above. Steady! Hold fast the straining mesh, the staying frame! Ah! A cord slipped, another snapped, the wooden railing swerved. The trumpet sent forth its peal for all to seek a shelter of safety. Peril, in another and even more terrible form than the usual explosion, threatened those below.

The block vibrated, plunged the depth of a thousand feet, spurned the crag, and, with the impetus gained in the rapid descent, bounded along the slope, shattering the rocks, ploughing the earth, and scattering clouds of dust in all directions. The mass of stone, released from its bed, descended with the awful velocity of an avalanche. For the moment it became animated with life, in movement, and advanced in the guise of an agent of destruction.

Guido Cari stood directly in its course, with his face turned towards the sea. The thunder of the fall and approach shook the ground beneath his feet, but he did not feel the shock. The note of the horn, the cries of the workmen, beat on deaf ears. His eyes followed the drifting mist, which he strove to reach with outstretched hands.

The marble block bounded forward, struck the man, and he fell.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE GALLERY OF A PRINCE.

FIVE years later Dr. Paul Weisener reached Russia by the White Sea and landed from a Swedish ship at Archangel.

He wished in making this summer journey to satisfy his own mind that the ancient Etruscan had not preceded him here, as elsewhere.

He had rounded the North Cape and followed the coast-line of rock and fiord through mist and storm. He had even sought traces of his hero the primitive merchant among the downs and lakes of Lapland and the heath and sand of the Kola peninsula.

Time had dealt lightly with the Herr Doctor. A few more threads

of silver were perceptible in his hair and beard, while his form was heavier, but his blue eyes retained their keen clearness and his countenance that expression of imperturbable good humor which invariably inspired sympathy in all who encountered him. The Maremma shepherd lent vigorous aid in opening the door of a sepulchre, and the Tyrolese guardian of the vineyard quitted his charge to indicate traces of a smith's forge, to the savant who repaid them with something more than the usual coin in his own geniality of manner.

The student was now compiling a work on Etruscan inscriptions, enriched with copious illustrations made from his own sketch-book.

He also dreamed in leisure moments of a romance of the early peddler,—the love left behind in ancient Clusium, whose toilet and chamber would receive most minute description, even to the sandals copied by Phidias for Minerva, and the vicissitudes of the journey, the perils to be encountered among the blond damsels of Gaul and Britain before his return to share the banquet-couch of his beloved.

Must the truth be confessed? The doctor, sternly condemnatory of fiction in precept, as unwholesome sweets cloying to the growth of the intellectual man, cradled his thought in reveries over this early and obscure page of the human heart, and promised himself, with a glow of enthusiasm, to arouse the interest of the frivolous multitude in his favorite study by infusing vitality into the long-forgotten dust. There would be scope for a trifle of by-play, more or less witty, with the female suffragists of the nineteenth century in bringing well forward the equality with husband and brother enjoyed by the Etruscan women of antiquity in contrast with the Greek.

The romance of the first peddler should be published, when completed, under a *nom de plume*, and the author derive surreptitious pleasure from the surprise of a dazzled public, while shielded in the side-scenes, as it were, when his actors, attired in accurate costume, stalked majestically across the stage.

The work on Etruscan inscriptions had grown steadily with exhaustive research into every available library and museum where a fresh fact could be winnowed from the useless chaff.

The classical romance progressed fitfully in the summer noonday beside the Mediterranean Sea, and in the winter midnight of Berlin or Munich, as the white disk of the lamp on the table formed a charmed circle, excluding modern society,—a true fairy-ring for imagination to revel in. Love sported and danced to the music of the Phrygian pipe on the site of the temples of Veii in the May-day. Robust Teutons defended the hearth-stones of their rude homes against invading hordes of savages advancing from the unknown North, and the first peddler found his peaceable enterprises for getting gain sadly disarranged, as trade still suffers on declaration of war between Germany and France, Austria and Russia, in the midnight of December.

One confidante shared the doctor's secret. The Frau Mutter, still erect and sprightly, knitting beside the window which overlooked the Luther-Platz at Worms, listened with absorbed attention to the pages descriptive of the peddler's wanderings. Ah, tender maternal heart! Ah, most lenient of critics, too often blinded by affection! Was the

Frau Mutter as much enthralled by the career of the Etruscan hero as proud of her son's power to describe him through whole pages and chapters of sonorously flowing narrative? Her little figure gained additional dignity of bearing, and she removed her spectacles to wipe away the moisture which dimmed them.

"Is it good?" the author would inquire, flushed and animated, pacing the chamber and waving the roll of manuscript which he held in his hand.

"*Ach Himmel!* it is wonderful!" the old lady would invariably respond, as she resumed her work.

A Roman nobleman once worshipped at the shrine of the Venus of the Capitol for the space of two years. Had Dr. Weisener thus become enamoured with some shadowy beauty of Etruria whose delicate features beamed on him in the flickering torchlight from the wall of the tomb? In avowing his homage to this divinity of another race and age, had sentiment awakened in his breast and a desire to spin the slender thread of her story?

Landing at Archangel, the traveller's first thought had been,—

"Shall I actually discover in this portion of Russia as much as a half-effaced letter for my work on the Inscriptions?"

His second reflection took the form,—

"What a dramatic situation the capture of my hero by barbarous ancestors of the Lapp would make, or even shipwreck on this coast!"

He found slight material for idle speculation, and proceeded inland, after encountering the usual delays which arise in such localities to thwart travellers. The country presented to him the serious disadvantages of summer locomotion, while the doctor felt little inclination to spend the winter season in this portion of Europe for the gain of smooth and swift transit over the snow of frozen highways.

A tarantass accommodated himself and his slender store of luggage, instead of the rapidly-gliding sledge of the cold season. In this vehicle he was jolted and dragged along the toilsome route. He skirted stretches of sombre forest, unterrified by the packs of wolves which would later menace the wayfarer, crossed ferries, and traversed sandy tracts of soil, strewn with logs.

During the journey he made amicable overtures to the coachman, and the peasants he encountered, with ready use of his store of local vocabulary. He adapted himself to the accommodations available, with his usual philosophy. He had purchased his own samovar and bed at Archangel, as indispensable preparations for the road.

One day, in the late afternoon, the jolting of the tarantass abruptly ceased: the left wheel, settling into a deep hole, had broken.

The doctor found himself on the outskirts of a small village.

Congratulating the coachman, and even the struggling horses, that the accident had not occurred at a greater distance from human habitation, he followed the path in the direction of the settlement, while a group of stalwart peasants, white in skin, and with blond hair, gathered to assist in extricating the vehicle.

The pastoral scene pleased the eye of the stranger, in its summer aspect. The heat had been intense, and clouds of dust had enveloped

him along the route. Now he contemplated green meadows, terminating in a marsh, in one direction; a small lake which reflected the sky of evening; and the hamlet, consisting chiefly of log buildings clustered about a church with a painted dome. Pine-trees environed the spot, and beyond the village the towers and roofs of a country residence were visible through the foliage of gardens.

"The mansion of the feudal lord on his estates," mused Dr. Weisener. "He must have held many *souls* in his day, this barine. How long has serfdom been abolished, though? Ah, I forget."

A light carriage, drawn by a pair of spirited horses, passed the pedestrian, and the inmate, a gentleman, scrutinized him, with the involuntary curiosity of localities where strangers are rare.

The doctor removed his hat, with a sweeping German bow. He recognized the Russian prince Ivan Pougatcheff.

The latter courteously returned his salutation, but with the puzzled expression of a person who endeavors to recall a face which he has already encountered elsewhere.

The carriage pursued its way, in a fresh cloud of dust, and disappeared.

A boy, with a shock of pale hair hanging in his eyes, attired in a linen shirt, and with bare legs, rode a horse down to the brink of the water to drink. A party of men mending a wagon ceased their work to gaze at the new-comer. A band of little girls, seated on a bench outside of a door, with cotton handkerchiefs tied over their heads, and their naked feet swinging, forgot the monotonous chant they were singing in chorus, to whisper together, and giggle, as the doctor's eye fell on them.

A larger boy, seated on the bank of the lake fishing, laughed good-humoredly when the doctor accosted him, in turn, with inquiries for an inn. The village could boast of no inn,—not even a primitive post-house. What was to be done? The traveller was bruised by the shaking of the conveyance over rough ground, tired, dusty, and hungry. His courage did not desert him, however. Some of these brave peasants would assuredly give him a shelter for the night.

As a solution of the difficulty, the young fisherman volunteered to take him to the house of the priest. The priest received him with kindness and hospitality, in a small chamber where a consecrated lamp burned before the holy images during the entire year, in the present case massive silver, set in a gilded shrine.

A table was spread, and a steaming samovar speedily greeted the jaded traveller with grateful refreshment. A loaf of rye bread, a deep wooden dish, containing salted cucumbers, and another receptacle of fresh honey, completed the simple repast.

While the meal was in preparation a local official was announced. He demanded the credentials of the new-comer. Dr. Weisener, prepared for such an emergency, gave him the requisite papers and his passport. The official withdrew to inspect these articles at his leisure.

Host and guest conversed in German on the usual topics, the condition of the harvest, the unprecedented severity of the previous winter, the unexampled heat of the present summer.

The doctor, sipping his tea, at length inquired,—

"Does the Prince Pougatcheff hold property in this neighborhood? I saw him on the road just now. I recognized him, for I once met him at a costume-ball given by the French ambassador at Rome."

"The prince is our seigneur," replied the priest, who was a small man, of fresh complexion, and with eyes set widely apart in a round face.

"He has been a great traveller, if I am not mistaken," pursued the doctor, who had acquired a habit of placing people in a methodical fashion in his own memory. "I think he had just returned from a Nile journey when I met him."

"Our lord has been truly a great traveller," assented the priest, with discreet reticence.

The doctor nodded, seeking another thread of souvenir: "The prince spent his winters at Vienna and Paris, and his summers at Wiesbaden. He did not pass much of his time in Russia."

The priest took a lump of sugar between his finger and thumb, as he rejoined,—

"Our noble b^{ar}ine was recalled by the Czar, and he prefers the province to the capital. He came here three years ago, and seldom quits the estate."

"He has some malady," suggested the doctor, quickly. "Is he truly ill?"

The priest shook his head and sighed: "No other malady than old age, between ourselves. He lives with his books and his pictures."

The coachman appeared at this moment, to announce that the tarantass would require some slight repairs before proceeding on the journey.

At the same time the traveller's papers were restored to him, as satisfactory, by the official.

The question of accommodation for the night was still under discussion, when the same light carriage noticed by the doctor on the road at an earlier hour drew up before the priest's house, and a servant alighted. This servant was a Swiss valet, very alert, deferential, and polished in manner, but with a flavor of Lucerne and Interlachen still lingering about him in a distant land.

"Fritz Hauser, if my eyes do not deceive me!" exclaimed Dr. Weisener, in surprise.

The valet smiled, and returned his greeting. The pair had last met at the Wengern Alp, where Fritz Hauser filled the post of secretary. This son of Helvetia rapidly explained that, a capricious world of fashion having deserted once popular resorts in favor of Hombourg and Norway, he had been tempted to try his fortunes in the service of the prince. Dr. Weisener, genuinely glad to encounter the honest fellow, shook hands with him. Fritz announced the object of his mission.

"His Excellency the Prince remembers having met the Herr Doctor at Rome," he said, resuming his capacity of menial, with a series of stiff bows. "His Excellency the Prince desires the Herr Doctor to return with me for dinner, and to pass the night at the ch^{ateau}, instead of in the village. I have been sent to invite him."

Dr. Weisener, accepting this gracious interposition of Providence in his behalf with alacrity, bade the priest farewell, and entered the carriage. He was amused by the coincidence of the return of his papers and the invitation of the noble happening simultaneously. Doubtless the prince had informed himself as to the identity of the stranger. The carriage passed through the *porte-cochère*, and entered the court of the seignorial mansion.

How may a traveller divine what changes an hour will bring forth? Dr. Weisener, so recently jolting along a rough road, stifled by dust and heat, with no other prospect before him than a dingy wayside inn, where a greasy repast, at the best, would be served him, found himself, instead, enjoying a perfumed bath in a dressing-room appointed with every modern luxury of the toilet, as preparation for dining with his host.

When conducted to the table, in season, he proved an agreeable and interesting companion, enlivening the tedium of a solitary meal, for the prince usually dined in state and alone.

"I last saw you at the ball, as a viking, in steel corselet and gilded helmet. By my faith, you were a formidable warrior in appearance," said the prince, laughing.

Dr. Weisener bowed profoundly. "His Excellency the Prince was a Persian satrap on the occasion, in superb embroideries, with jewels of the sun and moon on his breast."

The prince made a slight gesture, which signified, "Let us set aside ceremony for the moment."

In his bearing was perceptible that nice shade of affability, never degenerating to condescension, which is so much more frequently bestowed on another nationality than on one's own, especially by persons of rank.

He was a tall and slender man, of advanced age, with hair, skin, and moustache blanched to a uniform whiteness of hue. The cheek-bones were prominent, the nose slightly flattened, the eyes small, and concealed by rounded spectacles. The hands of the prince were long and slender, like those of a woman, with rosy, almond-shaped nails, and he wore a large turquoise ring on one finger.

The dinner was sumptuously served, and delicate in quality.

Charmed with the conversation of his host, who proved to be as brilliant a talker as he was an excellent listener, and stimulated by the good cheer, the savant began to yield to the pleasurable fancy that he was the hero of a fairy-tale, and had entered the enchanted wood, where he was bidden to feast in the palace, which might vanish away if he opened his eyes. Nothing could astonish him. A Parisian *chef* presided, as high-priest of the culinary art, over the digestion of Monsieur the Prince in the province, while his cellars boasted the choicest vintage of France, Hungary, and the Rhineland. The doctor would scarcely have marvelled had the ceiling opened for the descent of a shower of roses, and troops of slaves appeared with the traditional delicacies of the Roman banquet. He communicated some element of this idea, more by his bearing than by his words, to the amusement of his companion.

The meal concluded, the latter rose, and led the way to a smoking-room fitted with Persian hangings, carpets, and divans.

"I am a satrap again here, at least," said the prince, selecting for himself an Oriental pipe with an amber mouthpiece.

Dr. Weisener was not an excessive smoker. When the cigarette which he had chosen from the stock of cigars and pipes had been consumed, he did not kindle another. Perceiving this, the host soon put aside his *nargileh*, and proposed visiting the music-room.

"As you are a German, the inquiry if you are a good musician would be superfluous," said the prince.

The doctor replied by a slight shrug of the shoulders.

The entire mansion, which was spacious, was brilliantly illuminated, not so much to do honor to the stranger, as from the prince's habit of moving about restlessly during the night.

At a glance, the singularity of this interior impressed the spectator. He characterized it as *bizarre*, in his own mind.

The superabundance of light which irradiated every nook was shed abroad from lamps of odd design placed on brackets and softened by tinted globes, wax tapers clustered in chandeliers, lanterns swaying on chains of brass and silver.

The prince crossed an anteroom which served as a vestibule to the suite of apartments beyond.

In this anteroom were vases and tables of malachite, standards of valuable weapons, and rugs of costly furs, showy white and gray. The portraits of the imperial family adorned the walls.

"I have no longer the energy requisite to travel. I must now bring to me the lands where I have known happiness," he explained.

The doctor, at first dazzled by the lights and overpowered by the scents of flowers from adjacent conservatories, began to understand the fantasy of his host.

A French *salon*, with waxed floor, the furniture of white enamel of the First Empire, vases of Sèvres, and spirited scenes of Napoleon's campaigns depicted on the canvases of the walls, transported the prince to France, where he enjoyed for an hour his favorite authors, Racine, Bossuet, Voltaire, and Octave Feuillet or Georges Sand, rather than the later school of novelists.

An English drawing-room, with chimney-piece decorated with Queen Anne ware, grate of polished steel, table strewn with the latest periodicals, invited him, at another time, to London, where he had once held a diplomatic appointment.

Germany was accorded the faithful reproduction of a Nuremberg interior, and Austria the luxury of Viennese taste.

There was even a boudoir, fragrant with bamboo, sandal-wood, and matting, where the prince took golden tea on occasion, guarded by Chinese gods, and lined with every variety of costly and grotesque porcelain from the Celestial Empire.

The books of the library had been separated in order to give to each room its distinctive literature.

The paintings of a fine collection served the same end. The prince could sit, with crossed feet, on a divan, and contemplate trains of

camels traversing the desert; date-palms quivering in the hot air beside the Nile; the doors of mosques; the crowded bazaar. He could pace a gallery, and confront only the serene sky of Greece, rising above her ruined temples.

To complete the illusion, violets were massed in jars in the French *salon*, while roses bloomed in the English drawing-room, and a few tufts of forget-me-not decked the carvings of Nuremberg. A white poodle, shaven in absurd fashion, reposed on a cushion in the *salon*; a pug-dog waddled forth to greet his master in the drawing-room; a family of superb Persian cats disputed possession with the smokers in the Oriental boudoir.

Dr. Weisener looked about him with a naïve interest which was in itself the most subtle flattery.

Was it imagination that the physiognomy of his host had changed, becoming animated, and that the eyes, protected by the spectacles, sparkled with a fire not previously perceptible? He put aside the curtain of a door-way, with a smile, and repeated,—

“Knowest thou the land where the pale citron grows,
And the gold orange through dark foliage glows?
A soft wind flutters from the deep-blue sky,
The myrtle blooms, the laurel towers high.
Knowest thou it well?”

“Ah! if I know it!” echoed the doctor, with a gesture of recognition.

In the left wing of his country-house the Prince Ivan Pougatcheff was again in Italy. Pompeian coloring, Venetian mosaic, Roman and Florentine marbles and bronzes were to be found in lavish profusion, while the atmosphere was sweet with the scent of orange-blossoms and jasmine.

A gallery had been converted into a *loggia*, with the arched ceiling painted to represent a blue sky and the interlacing vines of an arbor. Lemon-trees were ranged on either side, and the gilded cages of rare birds were suspended amidst the foliage.

The door was flanked by two Etruscan sarcophagi, with female figures reclining on the lids. Beyond was a glass case which contained a gold wreath of Etruscan work, artistically placed on a cushion of black velvet.

In the centre of the *loggia*, on a standard of green marble, was a terra-cotta bust.

“I value this bust more than any object of art which I possess,” said the prince, approaching and placing his hand on the pedestal. “I gaze at it by the hour, and the face, so full of intelligence, seems about to speak in reply to my perpetual interrogations of the scenes it may have witnessed. Ah, my friend, may we not draw here the line between the glory of the past and our own time? Behold the difference between the marvellous fineness and power of this head, and the pretty nymph yonder, prepared to pirouette on one toe. Yes, this is a bust of the Renaissance, and attributed to Benedetto da Majano.”

Dr. Weisener listened attentively, and smoothed his beard with his

hand. He recognized the portrait of Cesare Tommasi made by Guido Cari of Spina. Surprise rendered him mute.

"May I venture to inquire where you obtained such a treasure?" he demanded, at length.

"At Paris," the prince replied, passing his finger delicately over the bridge of old Cesare's sharp nose.

Dr. Weisener was again silent, even as Benvenuto Cellini held his peace when the Duke of Ferrara showed the artist the collection of his own little vases, gift of the physician Giacomo da Carpi, as classical relics unearthed by a Roman nobleman.

"All honor to terra-cotta, the modelled clay dried by sun or fire," he thought. "Ancient deities of the barbaric and archaic period, whether Egyptian, Assyrian, Etrurian, or Mexican, were fashioned of it, to defy the touch of time. Greek and Rome did not disdain the plastic mould, nor the Renaissance down to the Della Robbias. Take thy place, Cesare Tommasi, in the ranks of museum-collections, or in the gallery of a prince, as a veritable *chef-d'œuvre*."

Was it imagination, born of the surprise of discovering the bust here, amidst such novel and magnificent surroundings, that the lapse of time had imparted dignity, refinement, strength, to the head last beheld on a rugged path outside a little Italian town, in the grasp of a woman greedy for gain? Surely the aged features, the furrowed brow, the puckered folds of cheek and chin, had a new gentleness, even pathos, in repose, such as the Renaissance sculptors knew how to impart to their portraits of cardinals and rulers in palace niche and cloistered tomb. The withered lips might part in satirical speech, yet kept their secret close, as Dr. Weisener likewise determined to do.

"And these sarcophagi?" pursued the visitor.

"I found them at Marseilles, and quite by chance," returned the collector, complacently.

The doctor bent over, and examined carefully the carving of the figures. The archæologist is not more readily deceived in the design, texture, and color of vase and urn than is the banker by false coin. The doctor detected certain trifling defects which would have escaped the uninitiated. He had already seen these ornaments of the sepulchre at the Villa Margherita, having been invited to purchase them, on a certain occasion, by the Duke di Nespoli.

"The diadem is a truly fine specimen," he affirmed, inspecting it in turn.

The prince laughed softly: "I bought that at Pisa. I always suspected the man had not acquired it honestly. *Chi lo sa?*"

He turned to a carved Gothic shrine, and opened the leaves. The shrine occupied a portion of the wall. Within was a fresco, thus richly set and preserved.

The Madonna, wearing a blue mantle, rested her foot on a globe entwined by a serpent, and held the Christ-Child on her knee. Judith, Esther, and Ruth surrounded her, in an attitude of devotion. A nun of the Augustinian order knelt in the foreground.

"This fresco was discovered in a dismantled convent of a small town of the Carrara district," continued the prince.

"Was the name of the town Spina?" demanded the doctor, with an imperturbable expression of face.

"Yes. You recall the incident, I perceive. Doubtless you were in Italy at the time," said the prince.

"On the contrary, I never heard of the circumstance. I seldom read local journals. However, I have rambled about Carrara, and there is a dismantled convent at Spina," said the doctor.

"The fresco proved to be a Ghirlandajo. I like the pose of the Madonna. I secured the work," said the prince, quietly.

Dr. Weisener gave him a sudden glance. Ah, how easy it is to gratify a costly whim when one is a prince owning mines in the Ural Mountains and estates in several provinces!

"I admit that the transaction of purchasing the fresco was slightly irregular," concluded the prince, with an ironical smile.

Then he carefully closed the leaves of the shrine, and turned away in the direction of the music-room. The guest found himself ushered into a lofty chamber, with basso-relievi along the cornice of Orpheus charming the animals with the strains of his lyre and the Lorelei maid touching the strings of her harp. A variety of musical instruments testified to the prevailing taste of the inmate of the house.

"I intend to have an orchestra next year," he announced, seating himself in a low *fauteuil*, while his visitor took his place at the piano-forte. "Perhaps you may be able to recommend to me some superior German violinists. There is one man in Europe who moves me to envy."

"The Prince Ivan Pougatcheff envious of any mortal?" queried the doctor.

His host leaned his head back against the chair and pressed together the tips of his slender fingers.

"The King of Bavaria may enjoy an opera as sole spectator," he said, meditatively.

Dr. Weisener played for hours, and the prince listened with rapt attention.

Why did the thoughts of the musician stray to another evening, when a beautiful woman, in the white robe of a past century, sat in a faded arm-chair, surmounted by a coronet, with her companions grouped about her, and the parterres of an old Italian garden visible beyond the casements? Unconsciously he rendered Liszt's *Pensiero* once more.

The music moved him to an impulse which as a man of the world he was bound to repress. He would stake his scholarly reputation that the gold crown in the glass case of the loggia was the diadem once worn by the Child King. He struck a note so sharply and suddenly as to produce a discord, and turned to his companion.

"Monsieur the Prince——"

"Continue, I pray you," interposed the prince, waving his hand. "The melody is exquisite."

The doctor closed his lips and repeated the *Pensiero*. After all, it was better so. One does not wear the heart on the sleeve in this day and reveal to a prince one's true opinion.

When the Cardinal San Giorgio purchased the tinted Cupid made

by Michelangelo to please Lorenzo di Pier Francesco Medici, as classical, of wily Messer Baldassare del Milanese, was the connoisseur less piqued to be informed that he was the victim of a trick than he would have been to remain in ignorance of the fact?

The doctor resumed his journey the following day.

"A dilettante is everywhere the same," soliloquized the traveller, once more seated in the tarantass. "He collects pictures, *objets d'art*, statues, and proclaims, 'This is happiness.'"

Prince Pougatcheff paused beside the bust of Cesare Tommasi, and mused aloud in turn: "These savants are all alike. They stray along with their eyes fixed on the stars. Our good German, for example, had not the slightest appreciation in reality of this work of the Renaissance."

CHAPTER XI.

VESPER BELLS.

AT the Alten Kaiser of Worms the table was spread that year for the reunion of the four friends.

Ah, old German inn of pleasant memories and type fast vanishing before more pretentious Grand Hotel Victoria, or Royal, where is the Teniers, the Ostade, the De Hooze, to paint the low arch leading to inner court and kitchen, winding corridors, and state chambers, with their quaint screens, porcelain stoves, eider-down coverlets of green silk on rosewood bedsteads? Where is the Rembrandt to depict Dr. Weisener and his friends gathered about the table in the dark and narrow dining-room, drinking the toast of commemoration in silence, with perceptible emotion, while mine host, a small, brisk personage of rosy visage, hovered near? Portraits of the date of the Palatinate hung on the wall,—a dame in stiff brocade, with a jewelled stomacher, and a courtier wearing a red coat and powdered wig.

The light of the lamp fell full on the group of earnest faces as each told his tale of persevering study, of labor scarcely begun, of animated controversy with some rival French or English savant. Two of the number had adhered to the original branch of medicine. Dr. Stellmacher, an eminent specialist in mental diseases, had journeyed from Vienna, and Dr. Krauss, skilled in analysis of the human digestion, had come from the State of Wisconsin, to meet again in Fatherland beneath the roof of the Alten Kaiser. The third colleague had strayed to the field of biology, and won fame at Berlin.

The tall flasks of Johannisberg vanished from the board, and were replaced by fresh ones. Cold boar, served with sauce-piquante of mustard, unlimited *leberwurst* and *blankraut*, jellies, sweets, a *mehlspeise* or so of the hausfrau's own make, received their meed of praise in the fine appetites of the guests.

The portraits were mute spectators of the scene from the shadows, and beyond the small windows the moon was visible, shining fitfully through the gray clouds on the town, the sloping roofs and chimneys, occasionally crowned with a deserted stork's nest, the sombre mass of

the cathedral, shrouded in obscurity, and the ancient synagogue, ivy-mantled, where a lamp burns perpetually before the desk. In the gathering darkness of night bats skimmed on noiseless wing among the poplar-trees. Witches of tradition might hover above the river-bank. Surely the castellan's daughter must be of the number, doomed to search ever for the lover sent forth on the Walpurgis Night to the cross-roads, where he was murdered by rivals, while the Wampolder Hof, home of the maiden, is still deserted.

Dr. Weisener leaned his elbow on the table, and raised his wine-glass to his lips.

"I have just seen in Russia the portrait-bust of an old Italian shopkeeper, which the possessor, Prince Ivan Pougatcheff, believes to be a work of the Renaissance," he said.

"And you did not undeceive him, of course," added the biologist.

"Oh, no! The assertion would have been far too presumptuous on my part. I once met the artist in Italy, though. He is a poor young marble-cutter of Carrara. I will look him up, at least, as I am now *en route* for Volterra. Shall I tell him that I have admired his labor, treasured in the gallery of a prince? That is the question."

"You will only make him cry out for the moon. It is easy to crowd the brain of an artist with follies," said Dr. Stellmacher, producing a small pamphlet from one of the capacious pockets of his coat. "I ask the favor that you present this copy of my lecture on monomania to the director of the lunatic asylum of Cortona. He is a man of rare ability, and you will enjoy his society. Stay! I must write an introduction on my card."

Dr. Weisener consented, and transferred the pamphlet to his own pocket.

At two o'clock the friends separated, with many parting embraces and hand-pressures. *Auf Wiedersehen!* What might not happen in the course of the next five years?

In the silence of the midnight hours do those spiritual adversaries, whose conflicts find monumental commemoration at Worms, also meet in good-fellowship, with vision cleared to celestial perception in another state? Does Luther step down from his pedestal, accompanied by gravely contemplative John Huss, intensely eager Savonarola, gazing forth from his cowl, Peter Waldus, and Wycliffe, and, quitting the guardianship of the German cities, Augsburg, erect, with her palm-branch, Spire, troubled yet unsubdued, Magdeburg, drooping and leaning on her broken sword, in melancholy contemplation of her desolate hearth-stone, meet the shadowy ranks of priests emerging from the cathedral door, the rabbi and his pupils of the synagogue, risen from burial in Jerusalem earth, with the greeting, "Peace! We are all brothers."?

Can it be that such a millennium occurs at Worms, when the doctor and his friends have separated for another five years, at the gate of the Alten Kaiser in the autumn?

Easter was late that season, and Rome unusually crowded.

Dr. Weisener stood beside the terrace parapet of the Pincian Hill, and watched the file of equipages drive past.

A graceful phaeton, drawn by cream-colored ponies, was freighted with the blue and carnation draperies of the baroness. The lady appeared more piquant and coquettish than ever, with a little hat perched on her coronet of black braided hair, and a parasol lined with red shedding a becoming glow on her somewhat fatigued complexion.

A large carriage followed, occupied by the Duchess di Nespoli and her children. The mother's toilet was of purple satin, and a golden hat shaded her pensive features, with soft plumes, as on a former occasion. The daughters Beatrice and Elena had attained slim maidenhood, and held themselves erect, with a consciousness of vanity. The little Carlo now wore the uniform of a cadet.

"Always beautiful and elegant, our duchess blooms in the springtime as a Roman violet," soliloquized the doctor.

Neither of the ladies observed the pedestrian.

A high English drag attracted all eyes to the Duke di Nespoli, who with difficulty restrained the mettlesome steeds. He appeared heavier, even sullen, in expression.

Another vehicle interested Dr. Weisener still more. This was a street-carriage of the Piazza, in which three persons were seated. Their expansion in the enjoyment of a *festa* was manifest to all.

The spectator recognized his former landlady of the Black Eagle at Spina, Marianna Cari. The widow, in a gray gown, a black bonnet, and white thread gloves, indulged in perpetual laughter. Beside her was seated Sabina Regaldi, handsome, sparkling with animation, eyes and teeth glistening. Even the masculine perception of the doctor discerned that the blue and carnation robe of Sabina, with its frillings, was a close imitation of the one worn by the baroness, in cheaper materials. Opposite was a florid man, with waxed moustache, silk hat, a flower in his button-hole, a conspicuous watch-chain, and yellow gloves.

"He is the son, Masolino Cari, who served me with the execrable wine," thought the doctor.

The black eyes of Masolino rolled in the direction of the former guest of the Black Eagle, but there was no light of remembrance perceptible in the lustrous orbs which had otherwise done *Il Bimbo* such good service.

Evidently the party had gone up in the world since the day spent at Spina by the Herr Doctor when summoned to the Villa Margherita.

His first impulse was to accost the family with inquiries about Guido, the sculptor. The throng of vehicles prevented him.

Quitting the Pincio, he made his way to a pharmacy situated on a narrow street in the vicinity of the Piazza di Spagna. The chemist, a German, was an acquaintance of long standing, and the traveller looked in on him to inquire for his family.

A carriage passed, and Dr. Weisener, turning his head towards the glass door, again contemplated the party of Masolino Cari.

Il Bimbo, with the silk hat tipped jauntily on one side, was lighting a big cigar. He had just uttered some witticism which caused his mother to lean back among the cushions, suffocating with hilarity, while the coachman turned on the box to join in the merriment.

Sabina frowned, and bit her lip. She found this loud laughter a trifle too much like the common people, and she had long breathed another atmosphere. She looked at Masolino critically, and decided that the duke's tailor would make of him a far better figure.

"There goes a new light in the medical world," observed the chemist, with a quizzical smile. "He is a celebrity at present."

"How is that?" demanded Dr. Weisener, in profound astonishment.

"Some years ago he joined an opera-troupe and went to South America. As a singer he did not get on very well, but he discovered a miraculous remedy for hoarseness out there."

"Truly a remedy?" questioned Dr. Weisener.

"Oh, some tropical weed," rejoined the chemist. "He brought it back to Europe, and has concocted from the root a syrup. No singer should be without it. Such is the adjuration of the advertisement. He is doing well with his cure, and will become a rich man in time. The wife is pretty. She was the maid of the Duchess di Nespoli."

He searched among the vials of his shelves, and presented a bottle to his companion. A label announced the Elixir of South America to be an infallible remedy for all affections of the throat. In a vignette Masolino Cari, with curling hair parted in the middle, eyebrows strongly defined, and conspicuous moustache, tendered a tiny bottle in his right hand, with a seductive smile.

Dr. Weisener gravely uncorked the vial and tasted of the contents.

"Friend Masolino, I salute thee!" he said. "My advice was to remain up there at Spina in obscurity and gain a humble livelihood in the marble-quarries, when thou wast fashioned by nature to shine before the world. Liquorice and water are good,—in their place,—and especially when brought from South America."

"Price, four francs the bottle," added the chemist, sententiously.

This incident effectually checked the interest of Dr. Weisener in Guido Cari. Masolino had intervened. Did Guido also wear a silk hat, thanks to the increase of the family fortunes, and smoke a big cigar on a holiday?

That evening the Duchess di Nespoli took her eldest daughter into society with her for the first time.

The mother was attired in black lace, looped with cream-colored roses. Brilliants of rare purity, the jewels of her house, sparkled in the tiara on her head, the necklace with pendent fringes, the clasping bracelets. The duchessina, in white, with a satin belt, had no other ornament than her youthful charm and natural grace.

The pair resembled the human embodiment of night and morning in their youth and maturity.

The baroness, as hostess, fluttered forth to welcome her guests in pink *moire* and pearls.

"Is it a penitence, *chérie*?" she demanded, glancing at the black dress with a little shudder when she had saluted Beatrice on both cheeks.

The duchess smiled.

"I am the past from to-night, *ma mie*," she replied. "Do you remember the time when we contemplated our faces in the old cracked mirror up at the Villa Margherita? I warned you that it would prove the mirror of truth."

"Do not suggest such horrors," answered the baroness. "You give me a migraine only to listen to you."

Later, the duchess sighed as she passed through her own rooms. She had worn the mask of conventional animation during the evening, but now that she was alone her features were pale and careworn.

The old palace of the Ginestre told no tales, yet wealth was rapidly ebbing away from the portals. The noble lady did not dare to contemplate the future. She shrank from questioning too closely the jewels she wore.

The world has changed since the bride with a dowry of a million scudi was painted on the wedding-fan. The baroness, had she been there, would have laughed away such painful reflections with her airiest badinage. The baroness was a daughter of her century. Let the world change, only take care to change with it.

The duchess felt her lace draperies softly pulled. She uttered a faint cry. Her nerves were shaken, and the hour was late.

A little marble hand, once modelled from her own by a young sculptor, had caught in the meshes of the lace. The hand usually rested on a writing-table, doing service as a paper-weight. Now the white fingers seemed to clutch her dress, as if endowed with the instinct of life. She turned hastily, and the hand, detached by the sudden movement, fell on the cement floor and was broken.

A maid hastened to gather up the fragments.

The duchess again sighed. She remembered vaguely having heard that some accident had happened to this very sculptor. Alas! she had intended to assist all those poor people up at Spina. How the seasons pass!

A month later Dr. Weisener stopped at Cortona. He recalled the circumstance of his friend's having given him an introduction to the director of an insane asylum of the vicinity. He searched his portemanteau, and found the pamphlet of Dr. Stellmacher, of Vienna, which he had completely forgotten until that moment. His actual motive for revisiting the spot was to verify an assertion already made in the "Etruscan Inscriptions," in a locality rich in such vestiges of antiquity.

He readily found the establishment for which he sought.

The asylum was a monastery situated on the summit of a hill, the garden and court enclosed within high walls. The place was suggestive of an isolation as complete as in the day of the most rigid monastic rule. The gray hill-side was skirted by olive-trees, and the ploughed fields still bore witness to the skill in agriculture of the former inmates of the cloister.

Meditating on the practical uses made of convents by modern Italy in adapting them to the requirements of barrack and hospital, the doctor rang the bell, and was ushered into the court by the porter.

The vast building was sinister even in the cloudless noonday. Silence was disturbed by strange exclamations and sudden shrieks which rent the air and chilled the blood of a listener fresh from the outside world. Wild figures fluttered behind the bars of upper casements.

"Why did not Gottlieb Stellmacher send his pamphlet by the post?" murmured the intruder, dissatisfied with his mission.

The Director received him with amiable courtesy. He was a slender and pale man, of studious aspect, with a lenient tranquillity of manner which frequently served to disarm the furious transports of his patients. A party of gentlemen surrounded him, also visitors, and the pamphlet of the eminent specialist at Vienna served as a means of general introduction.

"The fixed idea," said the Director, turning the pages of the book: "we could show the Doctor Stellmacher many curious instances of *l'idea fissa*, here."

An old man of majestic aspect, with snowy beard and hair, pointed to the corner of the garden.

"You might tell the gentlemen about our poor Angelo yonder," he suggested, in compassionate accents.

"True," assented the Director, gravely.

A young man, with a wreath of olive twigs on his head, had assumed an affected attitude in the shade of the trees, as if about to shoot an arrow from a bow. His pose suggested the Apollo Belvedere, and he took no heed of the spectators.

"*Poverino!* he stood for a sculptor in that posture, once, and the weather was severe. He caught cold, had a fever, and lost his mind. He will remain there all day, with his left knee bent and his arms outstretched, unless he drops to the ground with weariness," the old man explained, and led the way through the long corridors, as if accustomed to showing the place.

"Here is the most remarkable instance I have of monomania," said the Director, pausing to unlock a door. "Yes, the case is quite hopeless. The patient is a woman who has been here four years. She had a son entered in one of the military colleges, and he sickened of typhoid and died the next month. The mother lost her reason."

He opened the door of the cell, and the visitors inspected the inmate through a grating. The woman, clad in coarse gray cloth, like a nun, was tall and strong. Without noticing the intruders on her seclusion, she went and came ceaselessly, searching everywhere for some coveted article with her white hands. Her movements were feline, like those of certain animals in a cage. In her perpetual unrest she was stealthy rather than violent. Occasionally her lips moved, and at times she uttered a low laugh, but she neither raved nor shrieked.

Dr. Weisener recognized the woman from the Romagna.

Her hair was dishevelled, as on the occasion when she had followed him down the hill to proffer the bust of Cesare for sale, while her eyes, jasper in tint, and veined with yellow, shone with the same light.

"What does she seek?" was his involuntary question.

"Ah, *poveretta!* she seems to be searching ever for some buried

treasure which will restore her boy to life," replied the old man, in his tone of gentle commiseration.

"You must be familiar with the history of each patient," said the doctor.

The old man shrugged his shoulders.

"We have plenty of histories here," he replied, with a shade of contempt which his companion deemed professional.

The party proceeded down another long corridor. The patriarch took the lead, and indicated objects of interest, with the zeal of an assistant accustomed to fulfilling an agreeable duty. He conversed about Germany with Dr. Weisener the while.

The latter became abstracted. He was startled to find Emilia Tommasi here. The encounter brought back the souvenir of the little town of Spina, and troubled him, even as an indifferent spectator. Had she succeeded in selling the bust? Did the very transaction turn her brain?

"I shall be glad to obtain more information about that poor woman," he said to the old man. "Do you know much about her past?"

They had reached the end of the corridor, where a large picture hung opposite the entrance to a chapel. This work, a commonplace composition, represented the Trinity. God the Father appeared in the background, as an old man with flowing beard and hair. The picture belonged to that period of art when symbolism was spurned for a complete realism.

The guide paused, drew himself up to his full height, and announced, with flashing eyes,—

"I know all! I am the *Padre eterno*. Do you not recognize my portrait?"

The visitors recoiled in surprise. The old man was mad, and at sight of the picture of the Trinity his insanity had declared full sway.

"Mario!" the Director called, quietly.

An attendant appeared, and led away the patient, who offered no resistance, but bestowed a last glance, full of withering scorn, on Dr. Weisener.

"That old man firmly believes he is God the Father, as depicted by the artists of the *Cinque-cento*. He has served much as a model in studios, and is quite harmless. He likes to receive strangers and show them about. Ah, the fixed idea," concluded the Director, smiling, and tapping the pamphlet which he held.

When Dr. Weisener retraced his steps down the hill, he carried with him the image of a woman in a cell, seeking ever for a treasure which she could not find. He uncovered his head, and breathed the air with a new sentiment of freedom, as if wishing to do reverence to sky and earth that he was not such as she had become.

A summer day found the savant again on the shore at Viareggio. He had chosen this tranquil retreat in which to complete several chapters of his Etruscan romance, and especially those scenes of tender parting between the heroine and her lover about to cross the Alpine passes in quest of fortune.

The inspiration would not flow. The author's head began to ache; his pen spluttered, and he spilled ink on his linen cuff. He pushed aside his manuscript at last, with an exclamation of impatience, and went out on the shingle to soothe his thoughts with salutary exercise.

The sea was calm, with oily reflections; the sky overcast. The faint and sickly sweetness of lilies, on the margins of rice-fields, was borne to his nostrils by the land-breeze. The Carrara mountains reared their serrated peaks against the horizon, the slopes and ravines veiled in the blue mist of distance.

Dr. Weisener's temples throbbed, and his eyes were suffused. A Mediterranean mosquito stung him viciously on the neck. He stamped his foot on the sand, and said, aloud,—

"I will go up there and tell the young sculptor that I have seen his bust in the gallery of a prince. The walk will do me no harm, while the intelligence may bring him a fresh lease of hope. Who knows? None of these poor devils of artists get too much encouragement."

The June sunshine sparkled on the fountain of Spina, and on the faded Madonna of the shrine in the convent wall.

Dr. Weisener penetrated the town by the arch of gate-way, and glanced about him, convinced that the place was unchanged.

Flowers bloomed in the pergola of the terrace, and the carved head of the ass still adorned the cornice above the shop door of Cesare Tommasi. The beautiful ladies and the Child King no longer paused in the narrow street, surrounded by an excited throng, but the pedestrian had just seen them elsewhere. The tarnished sign of the Black Eagle had been suppressed, and, in anticipation of such an emergency, the prudent visitor had stored the bag slung over his shoulder with bread, Bologna sausage, and Gruyère cheese.

A child ran out of the shop, followed by a tiny creature in whom the doctor recognized the dwarf, Pia Tommasi.

The latter carried the copper vessel of the household to obtain water at the fountain. She spoke in caressing tones to the bright-eyed boy, as she had never addressed the riotous crew of the little Regaldiis. The child was the steward's baby, also Andrea Vanucci by name, and Pia, in the loneliness of a stricken heart, had vowed a passionate devotion to the infant who had drawn the prize of her dowry from the priest's hat. Spina respected this species of adoption.

"The dwarf will be able to tell me all that I wish to know," reflected the doctor.

He went forward, and accosted her, with his customary easy good humor: "Eh, signorina! I have come back to Spina once more. Good-day."

Pia scrutinized him from head to foot, without returning his salutation. She became very pale, and trembled violently.

"How is this?" exclaimed the doctor, jocosely, and seated himself on the ledge of stone, where Masolino formerly read stale newspapers. "I perceive you have forgotten me. I bought some fine lace of you, too, on a former occasion."

"No, signore, I do not forget," replied Pia, in a hoarse and broken voice, which did not permit of banter.

"See! you must tell me all the news of Spina while I eat my luncheon, for I am aware that the Aquila Nera is no longer kept, or, at least, must have passed into other hands."

Thus speaking, the pedestrian unfolded his handkerchief, and spread it, napkin-wise, on his knee, then drew forth from his bag the substantial store of Bologna sausage which his stomach craved after the walk. He endeavored to lure the steward's baby to his side by means of choice morsels, as one would spread crumbs for a bird, but the little Andrea, unaccustomed to strangers, held shyly aloof.

Pia had placed her copper vessel on the ground.

"Then you know?" she said, steadying her voice with an effort.

"I know little," replied the doctor, kindly. "How is Cesare Tommasi, the father?"

He pronounced the name slowly, and a strange smile flitted across his features when he recalled the habitation where he had seen the portrait of the old dealer.

"He is there," said Pia, curtly, nodding in the direction of the shop.

"Is he well?" pursued the doctor, cutting a slice of the sausage with his clasp-knife, and employing a wedge of bread as a plate for the reception of the delicacy.

"In as good health as he has ever been since he had the stroke, signore," answered Pia, with a sob rising to check her words.

"A stroke? Ah, that is sad. Well, well, little one, we must all grow old. I wish to see Guido Cari, the sculptor, who made that bust of the father. Will you call him? Is he here?"

Pia gave the speaker a look of the most eloquent reproach, and raised her hands to her head with a tragic gesture. Then she crouched on the stones, and began to weep convulsively.

"The signore said that he knew!" she moaned, rocking herself on the ground in her sorrow.

Dr. Weisener put aside his luncheon, with a shocked expression.

"Where is Guido Cari?" he inquired, abruptly.

"He is not here," sobbed Pia, with that evasion of the mention of death peculiar to her race.

"Where has he gone?" persisted her interlocutor.

Spina had become aware of his advent.

Sandro, the cobbler, a trifle more withered and bent in outward aspect, hovered near, with the old shoe which he was mending in his hand. Sabina's mother and several other women came in quest of water at the fountain. The steward and the priest appeared in the distance.

Sandro, eying the fragments of sausage eagerly, made Dr. Weisener understand the truth by a series of pantomimic gestures in the direction of the Campo Santo, rather than by words.

Guido Cari was dead. Five years before he had been killed by the fall of a block of Carrara marble. One could not understand too well why he had lingered in the ravine to meet such a doom. Accidents often happened over yonder.

Dr. Weisener thus learned of the fate of the sculptor for whom his own personal interest had developed too late. The steward spoke the most clearly, seconded by the priest, while Sandro and the group of women heightened the effect of a statement by sudden and vivid exclamations of corroboration. The village resembled the stage chorus: the leading voice was still silent.

At length Pia checked her tears and rose to her feet. She had wept so often in unavailing regret that the first poignancy of her grief may have passed. She now reclaimed her right to precedence with a swift change of emotion to jealous tenacity in thrusting aside the testimony of the neighbors. Did she not know everything concerning Guido Cari and his brief career?

Seated beside the fountain, with all these animated faces gathered near, and Pia standing before him, Dr. Weisener was required to rehearse the elation, dejection, and despair of the artist. He saw the Aurora in the perfect beauty of the freshly-moulded clay, and then shattered, trampled under foot. The Aurora was no mere heathen goddess, be it understood, but one of the angels of heaven, according to Pia. The fresco was uncovered before his eyes. Ah, if Guido could have waited another day all would have been well. Fresh tears and sobs from the tiny woman interrupted this portion of the narrative. Sabina's mother wiped her eyes in sympathy. The men were visibly moved.

A small sum of money acquired magnitude at Spina from the poverty of the inhabitants.

"Perhaps I did not receive enough for the fresco," said Pia, suspiciously, and again ceasing to weep. "The dealer always laments that he gave me so much. He declares that it is robbery of his own children."

"He has not succeeded in selling the fresco, then?" suggested the doctor.

Pia sighed and shook her head. The steward coughed, and betrayed uneasiness.

"Oh, no! he has never been able to sell it, as he anticipated. He fears it would not be permitted to pass out of the country, and is waiting until some national gallery may require it," said Pia.

The doctor was silent. Why give an additional pang by undecieving this truly heroic soul?

Afterwards he visited the church, and the Villa Margherita, where the terraces still bloomed with flowers in their season. The house had been gradually dismantled of appointments. The picture of Madonna Pia alone was left hanging on the wall of the late count's chamber.

Pausing in the large *sala*, he obeyed the impulse to strike a chord of the Pensiero on the old piano, which gave forth only a harsh and jangling note. Even the peacock was dead.

The convent chapel was always open. An image of the Virgin and vases of artificial flowers adorned a new altar, while a panel, usually concealed by a curtain, was suspended on the wall in the space from which the fresco had been removed. A local artist had painted St. Monica on this panel.

Pia's dreams had gained fame. She had become the most important person at Spina. Fra Antonio recited masses for the repose of the soul of Guido Cari. Sandro, the cobbler, rang the bells vigorously for the same laudable end. In another century, grief and this trance-faculty of dreaming would have led her to embrace a religious life. Instead, she managed the shop, and took charge of her parent in his decrepitude. Never had the business of Cesare Tommasi flourished as at the present time and in the hands of his daughter. The cause of this prosperity was not so much a fulfilment of the old adage that water flows to water, for Pia made no extensive purchases, as that her own prosperity attracted the needy. Pia had a lucky face, and all her undertakings must turn out well. People flocked to ask her advice, if no more. Could she not write a little letter to those dealers at Rome and negotiate the sale of old china, books, and silver?

The dwarf kept at the side of Dr. Weisener, and claimed his attention eagerly for the inn, the campanile, the vestibule where Guido had worked. She made no mention of the Duchess di Nespoli. Her former interest in the great lady had subsided to a sullen rage when her aid could no longer be of use.

Dr. Weisener entered the shop, and even inspected Cesare Tommasi, propped up by pillows in his bed. A stout country-girl waited on him, while a stool placed at the bedside enabled Pia and the steward's baby alike to climb to a level with his face.

The visitor gazed attentively at the old man.

"His portrait would be more accurate done in yellow wax, at present," he thought.

Pia pulled his coat gently, and pointed to the shelf once occupied by the bust of terra-cotta.

The statuette of St. Christopher, bearing the child on his shoulder, rested on the bracket. The figure had been chiselled in marble, and the diadem on the head of the child was gilded.

Such was the sole result in marble of Guido Cari's career as an artist.

Dr. Weisener could not resist making a final inquiry. "And the step-mother, the Emilia?" he hazarded.

Pia shuddered, and glanced over her shoulder with a quick gesture of apprehension.

"Hush! He might hear. She went away one night years ago. Oh, is she coming back?"

"No, my child," replied Dr. Weisener, firmly. "I have seen her in a mad-house, where she must remain for life."

Pia clasped her hands, as if doubting the evidence of her senses, while joy and incredulity struggled for the mastery in her breast. This was the terrible fear which had menaced her all these years. The woman from the Romagna, with her meek bearing, her oblique look, her restless white hands, might appear on the threshold and claim a place beneath the roof where prosperity reigned.

"It is true?" faltered the dwarf, thirsting for the confirmation of hope. "The gentleman would not deceive me?"

"Rest assured that it is true," affirmed Dr. Weisener.

Pia seized his hand and kissed it. Then she darted into the chamber beyond, climbed on the stool, clasped the stiffened arm of her father, and cried in his ear,—

"Listen! The Emilia has gone away. Oh, *bello!* she can never come back, *padre mio.*"

Cesare Tommasi opened his eyes widely, and over the frozen immobility of his features passed the shadow of the glow transfiguring the face of his child.

Surely he had understood.

Dr. Weisener selected another festoon of old lace in the shop, and a tiny tear-bottle taken from an Etruscan tomb.

Pia accompanied him to the gate. She was unchanged. By what mockery of nature had all these trials smitten her without tracing an additional furrow on her face?

"They are all gone, signore," she said, sorrowfully. "Guido lies yonder in the Campo Santo. Sabina, Masolino, and even Marianna Cari, have each left us. The great people never come back to the Villa Margherita."

"Farewell," said the doctor, grasping his stout walking-stick and preparing to depart.

"*Addio!*" said Pia, and her voice was like the echo of the tall houses and towers.

When he turned back at the angle of the path, her quaint little figure was still visible, framed by the arch of the town gate.

The pedestrian gained the ruined chapel where Masolino and Guido had formerly paused to rest, and seated himself on the step. His thoughts reverted to the statue of the Aurora lost forever.

"May there not be some Valhalla for disappointed artists in a future state, where their works incomplete or destroyed will find a glorious fulfilment?" mused the doctor. "A fitting vestibule would be those inaccessible classical treasures of Herculaneum buried beneath the hill, with the line of mosaic pavement still visible, and all those works of Grecian art destroyed at Rome by the zeal of the early Christians. The walls should be covered with lost cartoons, Leonardo da Vinci's Battle of Niccolò Piccinino facing Michelangelo's soldiers bathing in the Arno. Pope Julius would look down in majesty from his niche above the church door, and Sforza proudly ride his charger. All Verrocchio's altars and reliquaries, adorned with metal-work, his vases covered with animals and foliage in relief, his chased cope-buttons and cups ornamented with groups of dancing children, would be carefully gathered here. Even the two inlaid chests wrought by Benedetto da Majano for King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, and unpacked in the royal presence only to discover that they had dropped to pieces from the effect of sea-damp, would be honored with complete restoration in this paradise of achievement. And our poor Guido Cari of Spina? His Aurora would also be granted a pedestal."

A winged seed, germ of a wayside plant, with gossamer sail full set, alighted on his coat-sleeve.

"What is human fame, after all? Guido Cari may have possessed the soul of a Giovanni da Bologna or a Donatello, and his sole earthly

record is a terra-cotta bust, falsely attributed to the period of the Renaissance," pursued the doctor, and blew away the seed.

He drew from his pocket the little tear-bottle and poised it on his palm. A band of black figures with linked hands moved in some mystic rite on the reddish-brown surface. The antiquity of the vial might be problematical, but it suggested to him an inspiration. A tear-bottle in gilt outline should be designed on the cover of his Etruscan romance.

The sky was golden above Spina, and the vesper-bell rung by Sandro the cobbler warned the loiterer of the approach of night. These bells acquired to the listening ear the melancholy intonation of farewell. Up there the light of lingering day was radiant, effulgent, and the Carrara peaks were swathed in pink mist; below the chill shadows were lengthened over the brown earth.

Life is marked by many peals of vesper-bells.

Dr. Weisener recognized that storms had ravaged the land; the rivers had inundated the vineyards and corn-fields, swollen by torrential rains; the cliffs had shed terrific ruin in avalanche of stones on many a humble hamlet; the trees had been uprooted by the blast of summer hurricane. Now all was again peace.

Marble of Carrara!

In the cemetery of an American city rises a broken column guarded by an angel with folded wings at the base. The monument commemorates the bereavement of a mother whose only son was killed by a fall from his horse. The sad particulars of the accident are known to all the world. The envious and the needy sigh, "The young man had everything to live for, and yet he was cut off in his prime."

Who ever pauses to marvel whence came the glistening shaft, a block once lowered from the quarry of the mountain-side, and, thwarted in aim by circumstance, smiting the hand which should have shaped it into the image of the Dawn, with upraised face and floating hair?

Who ever thinks that the angel with folded wings watching amidst the shrubbery of the cemetery may record the close of two lives instead of one?

Schubert too wrote for silence: half his work
Lay like a frozen Rhine till summers came
That warmed the grass above him.

THE END.

A MODERN SPARTACUS.

THE climate of Spanish America tends to stimulate impromptu action, if we may thus summarize the theory of a Mexican statesman, whom his American friends were quizzing about the tri-weekly revolutions of his native land.

"It's all the weather," said he, "the temperature of the tropics, that ripens desires into deeds. Whenever our states feel the need of an amendment, they just mend away, without haggling for the tardy aid of the general government."

But that tendency has its occasional disadvantages, when the penchant for self-help happens to affect individuals. Bishop Riley complains that it is almost impossible to prevent Mexican boys from gambling at school, where the desire for cash begins to assume a practical phase, in spite of constant raids on gaming-implements. In default of dice they will stake their *quartillas* on grasshopper-jumps or the number of drops in a dripping rag; and the trouble is that the development of this propensity does not stop at *quartillas*. In pursuit of their private whims some children of our Next Neighbor have played for higher stakes than any Northern gamester would have liked to risk since Robert le Diable staked his soul on the issue of a prize-fight. About a year ago (October 10, 1886) Colonel Lucilio Vargas of the Mexican regular army forced the approaches of an outlaw's stronghold in the rocks of the Sierra de San Martin, and sent up a flag-bearer to demand the instant surrender of the bandit chief, "in the name of his duty towards the laws of his country, and towards his followers, whose fate must depend upon his immediate acceptance of this ultimatum." In the course of the afternoon the colonel's herald, stripped of his uniform, returned with his flag and the following reply:

"If Colonel L. V. advances another mile, I herewith bet my life, the fate of my followers, and our faith in the justice of heaven on the event of a wager that within twenty-four hours I shall have his scalp on the stretching-board.

Yours truly,

"ERACLES BERNAL."

"Adding blasphemy to high treason," observes the official report; but, "expected reinforcements having failed to arrive, Colonel Vargas withdrew his troops under cover of night," and perhaps not an hour too soon to retreat under cover of his scalp, Eracles Bernal being notoriously apt to keep his word.

In his native hills he was once known as "the boy who stole Don Vicente's creek." Said Vicente, a pompous mestizo, strutting in the prestige of a semi-official authority, was the *mayoral*, or overseer in chief, of a former convent hacienda, now a government domain, used only as a stock-farm. By way of asserting the prerogatives of his position, the mayoral monopolized not only the hunting-privilege of the

vast estate, but also the use of its drinking-water, and, a few weeks after the death of young Bernal's father, seized one of the widow's cows, "as a warning to trespassers upon the reservations of a government watercourse." "Mark my words, neighbors, if I do not make him stop bragging about that government creek!" shrieked Master Bernal, when the bailiff had elbowed his way through an indignation meeting of the widow's friends, and on the very same evening he marched a posse of trusty playmates to the head-waters of the monopoly creek. Up in the dells of the Sierra, and nearly ten miles above Don Vicente's stock-farm, the boy had private knowledge of a place where a portion of the brook found its way into a cavern, or sink-hole, without a visible outlet towards the next valleys of the water-shed; and by widening the channel of the effluent nearly all the water of the brook was diverted towards that drain. The small residue was absorbed in its course through the sands of the fountainless plain, and the next morning the mayoral was surprised to note the disappearance of the sacred stream. An exploring party failed to elucidate the significance of the portent, and it is on record that young Bernal was subpoenaed on a charge of having entered into a conspiracy with his uncle, the druggist of San Lorenzo, to effect the evanescence of a public pasture-brook by mixing its waters with some evaporative essence!

In his fifteenth year young Eracles met with an accident that limited the scope of his enterprise by confining him to the purlieus of his mother's rancho, or even of a sick-room, for many months; but a few years after his penchant for self-help had already assumed sensational phases, for in his nineteenth year he found himself at the head of a troop of regulators, organized for the purpose of enforcing the abolishment of peonage (the custom authorizing creditors to enslave the person or proxy of an impecunious debtor), but doing a thriving collateral business by raiding the stock-farms of political conservatives. His business partner at that time was one Lino Casales, an exiled politician of considerable forensic ability, and thus far the transactions of the firm seem to have been conducted with a minimum of personal violence.

But in 1876 the two principals were arrested by a special mandamus of the governor of Sinaloa on a charge of highway-robbery, and that episode forms a turning-point in the career of the junior partner. In the jail of San Sebastian Bernal seems really to have been treated with a good deal of superfluous inhumanity, and after effecting his escape he at once collected a band of heavy-armed sympathizers and marched to the rescue of his fellow-prisoners. A jail-delivery, preceded and followed by desperate street-fights, induced the governor to invoke the aid of the regular army; but, in spite of frequent reverses, the legion of outlaws continued to increase, both in number and enterprise, and when at last a declaration of martial law was enforced by the approach of two regiments of regular cavalry, Bernal retreated to the fastnesses of the Sierra de Pinos and raised the standard of revolt against the federal government.

In the budget of that government the "appropriation for the expenses of the Sinaloa campaign" has since become a chronic item, and the uniform failure of eight larger and more than a score of smaller

expeditions can be explained only by the concurrence of three causes,—the ruggedness of the Sinaloa highlands, the strategic genius of the bandit chief, and the inalienable sympathy of the country-population.

The topography of Sinaloa is rather peculiar. Like the hill-country of Daghestan, where Shamyl defied the power of the Russian Empire for twenty-three years, the state affords incalculable means of escape, both by land and by sea, being skirted by a multitude of farallones, or rock-islands, with a labyrinth of shoals and cliffs, and backed by the inexpugnable fastnesses of the Sierra Madre. More than once all the main passes of that Sierra have been closed by *ligaturas*, or chains of fortified batteries, supplemented by a cordon of scouts, reconnoitring the trails from fort to fort, and from pass to pass, all along the western slope of the Sierra, from San Rosario to the gap of the Rio del Fuerte; but Eracles Bernal laughs at *ligaturas*, as Love does at lock-smiths, and, by means unknowable to his would-be captors, evades their blockade whenever he finds it convenient to recruit his resources in the hamlets of the lowlands. On one occasion a scout dashed into camp, breathless with the news that a large body of armed horsemen had just crossed the foot-hills and turned down a trail in the direction of Val de Chino, not more than half a league from the head-quarters of the patrol. The commanding officer at once started his men in pursuit, and in a gap of the foot-hills struck a trail that "could have been followed by moonlight," so plain were the hoof-marks in the sandy soil. The track led down to a small tributary of the Rio de los Mimbres, and there disappeared in the gulches. If the bandits had crossed, or even approached, the river at any point, the alluvium of the beach would have infallibly betrayed their march-route, and, on the other hand, they could not have retraced their steps without crossing the sandy *vega*; but, after making the circuit of those gulches in ever-widening circles and reconnoitring the beach for miles up and down the river, the troopers had to return without any practical result, though not without a large assortment of uncanny theories.

Fortune, too, has now and then favored its votaries. In the midst of a hot pursuit in which the pursuers had the advantage of provisions and stouter horses, the Bernalites were once saved by an impenetrable mist that shrouded the highlands for half a week. In 1883 their marauders were tracked to the valley of Sovalitos, in the northeast corner of the state, where the vigilance of the blockaders succeeded in isolating the outlaws' camp and intercepting several foraging-parties. Famine seemed imminent, and the rebel chief, giving way to an acute attack of his chronic despondency, was just on the point of saving his followers by an act of self-sacrifice, when the insurrection of Sonora called all the available troops to the northern frontier and thus raised the siege in the nick of time.

Evident love is the most effective flattery, and the country-people of the Mexican Republic cannot doubt that Eracles Bernal has persistently championed their rights with a passionate and self-denying devotion. With the scanty means at his disposal, he has for years assisted the reform plans of the liberal party and subverted the victims of their opponents, and his camp has long been the safest refuge of

political exiles and fugitive *peons*, including unavoidably many miscreants, who have, in the course of years, rather modified the trusting disposition, though not the charity, of the mountain chief. He has never ceased to protest that his quarrel with society is not of his own seeking, and his captives have often acknowledged the forbearance and even courtesy of their host; but at election-meetings, which he now and then visits in spite of all risks, he assumes a different tone, and the impassioned emphasis of his invectives has often inspired his hearers with a frenzy of aggressive enthusiasm. It is said that more than one of his opponents has abruptly left such meetings for fear of being torn into pieces by an assembly of unarmed country-folks. "I am glad that the commissioners have failed in their mission," said a correspondent of the *Diario*, when the government had attempted to negotiate the surrender of the bandit chief: "if that man should ever be pardoned he would promptly go into politics, and an agrarian revolt would be the immediate consequence. In an open debate no secular or spiritual agencies could for a moment hope to resist the effects of his diatribes."

Since 1884, when his strategy baffled the manœuvres of the best government troops, hundreds of sight-seers have risked the perils of the lion's den to get a glimpse at the invincible outlaw; but Bernal loathes that sort of notoriety, and in the hour of victory, while his followers flushed the intoxication of triumph with other stimulants, he has often retired to his tent and with uplifted hands prayed for deliverance from the misery of his existence. With all his reckless personal courage and Robin Hood popularity, he is, indeed, anything but a typical bandit chief, fond of midnight raids and greenwood revels. His Spanish lineage has tinged him with that national gloom which Frederic Schiller traced to the smoke-clouds of the Santo Oficio, and the dynamics of his oratorical explosions have been gathered in solitary meditations rather than in the noise of camp-fire controversies. Like the Russian exile Bestujeff, he has a poetical vein, and a printer of Mazatlan has published a collection of *decimas* ascribed to the Brigand of Sinaloa and eagerly circulated by his admirers, though the quasi-religious jeremiades of his lyrics are rather depressing and the classical allusions somewhat off color, as where he compares his fate to that of the "vulture chained to Caucasus."

A few years ago he disposed of all his personal property to furnish the travelling expenses of a younger brother, whom he had resolved to send abroad to save him from sharing his fate in the event of a possible disaster, and during the parting scene in the presence of his swash-bucklers managed to maintain his stoicism, but passed all the next night in an agony of prayer. On the following morning he refused to leave his tent till his attendants almost forced him to break his fast; and it has been predicted that the hero of thirty campaigns will ultimately surrender to a priest. But his personal friends are confident that he is resolved to conquer an acceptable peace or to die in his boots. There has been no lack of overtures on the part of his opponents, but the trouble is that he cannot risk to trust the security of their safe-conducts for a single day. In 1885 the government dispatched a special

board of commissioners to arrange the preliminaries of a surrender, if the outlaw's terms should not prove too exorbitant; but those terms would have surprised the business manager of a Philadelphia gas company: "pardon for himself and every member of his band, a bonus of thirty thousand dollars, an armed escort of twenty-five retainers, or a position in the army commanding a district of Sinaloa."

"A premium on brigandage might prove a perilous concession" (a risky precedent, as we would say), "and might make a peace of that sort very unstable," remarked the chairman of the committee.

"For that very reason," said Bernal, "I ask for an appointment to some position of public trust, to give me a chance to prove my patriotism and the injustice of the charges accusing me of wanton resistance to the laws of my country."

Clearly a case of irreconcilable interests, and the members of the conference parted with mutual regret. Hostilities then recommenced, but in the mean time the state officials of Sinaloa were authorized to compromise the abnormal state of affairs, and to devise some *modus vivendi* with the inexpugnable incubus. Several communities, indeed, proceeded to formal negotiations with the autocrat of the Sierra de Pinos. Commissioners passed to and fro to treat for the ransom of captives. The spoils of war were sold at public auction, reserving the former owner a fixed rate of pre-emption. Census-takers and tax-collectors applied to Bernal's adjutant for statistical information. In the official revenue reports certain districts of Northern Sinaloa are formally quoted as "under benefit of exemption," the remnant of visible cash being a presumptive minimum. The success of Eracles Bernal in defying the established authorities of his native land represents, indeed, a unicum in the history of brigandage, for it may well be doubted if any equally civilized country, even of limited area, has ever before been obliged to practically recognize the autonomy of a robber camp.

Within a radius of thirty miles from his head-quarters the outlaw of the Pine Mountains moves with the freedom of a respected private citizen, at least during the intervals of the annual campaign which confines his summer haunts to the wilderness of the upper Sierra. Peasants doff their hats and ejaculate their "Buenos dias de Dios, Señor," on meeting El Capitan, with or without his escort. Merchants honor his draft on sight, priests enter his camp without fear, but seem to share his favors with fortune-tellers, for, strange to say, the armed reformer, as his partisans call him, appears in some respects to be as superstitious as a vision-haunted hermit. Since the death of his brother-in-law he has taken his household under his special protection, and, having no children of his own, makes a great pet of his little nephew, who now and then accompanies him on his less perilous excursions. But during his last visit to San Lorenzo the bullet-proof chieftain entered the house of a friend, and, with evident emotion, recommended that youngster to his special care. "I have a misgiving," said he, "that we shall not keep Teo much longer if we ever trust him out of sight. Two nights ago I dreamed that I sent him up to the *tezada* [a sort of flat roof] where the women were churning butter, and that was the last time he was ever seen alive. We searched the house and

all around for miles, and met all sorts of people; only him we could never find." He also believes in lucky and unlucky days of the week, but does not permit that tenet to interfere with his habit of doing his best at any time, for no surprise-party has yet caught him napping.

Nor have visions ever deterred him from the steady pursuit of his plan to extend his political clanship in all directions. He has partisans in Nuevo Leon, Acapulco, and Zacatecas, as well as all over Sinaloa, and it is surmised that the advisers of the government deprecate the plan of driving him to extremes, having reasons to apprehend that the ensuing revolt would not be confined to the Sierra de Pinos.

Felix L. Oswald.

NOVEMBER BOUGHS.

YOU LINGERING SPARSE LEAVES OF ME.

YOU lingering sparse leaves of me on winter-nearing boughs,
 And I some well-shorn tree of field or orchard-row;
 You tokens diminute and lorn—(not now the flush of May, nor July
 clover-bloom—no grain of August now;)
 You pallid banner-staves—you pennants valueless—you overstay'd of
 time,
 Yet my soul-dearest leaves—the faithfullest—hardest—last.

"GOING SOMEWHERE."

My science-friend, my noblest woman-friend,
 (Now buried in an English grave—and this a memory-leaf for her dear
 sake,)
 Ended our talk—"The sum, concluding all we know of old or modern
 learning, intuitions deep,
 "Of all Geologies—Histories—of all Astronomy—of Evolution, Meta-
 physics all,
 "Is, that we all are onward, onward, speeding slowly, surely bettering,
 "Life, life an endless march, an endless army, (no halt, but it is duly
 over,)
 "The world, the race, the soul—in space and time the universes,
 "All bound as is befitting each—all surely going somewhere."

AFTER THE SUPPER AND TALK.

After the supper and talk—after the day is done,
 As a friend from friends his final withdrawal prolonging,
 Good-bye and Good-bye with emotional lips repeating,
 (So hard for his hand to release those hands—no more will they meet,
 No more for communion of sorrow and joy, of old and young,
 A far-stretching journey awaits him, to return no more.)
 Shunning, postponing severance—seeking to ward off the last word
 ever so little,
 E'en at the exit-door turning—charges superfluous calling back—e'en
 as he descends the steps,

Something to eke out a minute additional—shadows of nightfall deepening,
 Farewells, messages lessening—dimmer the forth-goer's visage and form,
 Soon to be lost for aye in the darkness—loth, O so loth to depart!
 Garrulous to the very last.

NOT MEAGRE, LATENT BOUGHS ALONE.

Not meagre, latent boughs alone, O songs! (scaly and bare, like eagles' talons,
 But haply for some sunny day, (who knows?) some future spring, some summer—bursting forth,
 To blossoms, verdant leaves, or sheltering shade—to nourishing fruit,
 Apples and grapes—the stalwart limbs of trees emerging—the fresh, free, open air,
 And love and faith, like scented roses blooming.

Walt Whitman.

THE STORY OF A STANZA.

I BEGAN life as a poet. I mean to say that when I left college, and the editorial chair of the college magazine, writing verses was the nearest approach to any trade I had learned; and while I looked about for a profession, I continued that pleasing but unprofitable occupation. A visit to Italy encouraged the tendency, and on my return I published a volume of rhymes very appropriately called "*Dolce Far Niente*," which cost me nothing to print, and paid me nothing after it was printed. The publishers—a highly respectable firm in every particular—failed in business before a second edition was called for; but I do not attribute that catastrophe to their connection with me. The critics wrote favorably of my little book, and I can still read my name, if I care to do so, in literary biographical dictionaries as a result of it. The price of it was fifty cents, quite enough for a brown muslin volume of one hundred pages; but I have bought copies myself since then for three times that cost, and have been glad to pay it.

When I arranged for the printer the manuscript, I submitted each piece to a more critical test than I had hitherto applied, and found it necessary to reject several which in the glow of composition I had been satisfied with. One of these—of only twenty-three lines, and which had been almost an improvisation down to the last three—I endeavored to polish up to the plane of the two dozen I preserved; but in vain: I had with much regret to sacrifice it. It had been written under circumstances which gave it the interest of a souvenir. It was, namely, at the Baths of Lucca that it had first seen the light, at a time when I was occupied in nursing back to health a dear friend who had just suffered a terrible bereavement. He was Buchanan Read, whose wife and two children had lately fallen victims to the cholera, which still raged at Florence. On account of the associations I did not therefore destroy

the verses, but preserved them in a commonplace book among other memoranda of my Italian life.

A quarter of a century, chiefly passed in foreign lands, went by without my having even thought of the lines, when I came across them by accident, and in a confidential moment showed them to another dear friend, Sidney Lanier. Somewhat to my surprise, they pleased him, but his quick eye fell at once upon the weak spot,—the *Krebs-schaden*, as Piloty would have termed it,—and from criticism he passed instinctively to an attempt to remedy the defect. Together we tried for several hours to hammer into shape the obstinate final triplet. Even the master failed. The task was a difficult one. The construction of rhyme and rhythm made conciseness imperative. Up to the balking point Pegasus had gone in a canter. The premises of an allegory—almost a charade—had been expressed, but at the critical point, with only twenty-three syllables left in which to gather up all the threads into a consistent skein, the flax tangled. To resume the first metaphor, at the last hurdle the steed remained stationary, with folded wings.

For months the verses were laid aside again, when one morning Professor Sylvester visited my studio. The inventor of the New Mathematics is also the author of the "Science of Verse," an original poet, and a translator of Horace and Schiller, who has robbed them of no charm of thought or grace of expression by rendering them into English measures as flexible and as sonorous as their own. No one was better fitted to revamp a verse or remould a stanza. I explained to him my difficulty, and he became interested in solving it. A hundred changes were rung upon the thought, and the fresh inspiration of new rhymes was invoked. To him it had the fascination of a problem for the mathematician, intensified by the ambition of a constructor of verse *par excellence*. The morning passed, and I, tired, I must confess, of the vain labor, suggested luncheon. There was a restaurant in the basement, and, as we sipped a glass and munched a sandwich, our attention dwelt upon the impossible task. We lighted our cigars, and took seats in the garden, where the spring sunshine lay upon the grass and shot emerald gleams through the fresh foliage of the vine. The court was in shadow before the Professor threw up the sponge, and as we walked musing up the street together I was almost conscious of the jingle of rhymes—like the bells on the car-horses—the poet-mathematician was trying in his mind. At parting he wished me to promise "to keep at it." "It was worth it," he said, "and there was no problem impossible to solve."

While I did not try again, the unfinished stanza continued to haunt me at intervals. Time passed, and it was again forgotten, when the other day, in a moment of sweet idleness, I picked up the book once more. The witchery of the past returned, and memory became a thing to conjure with. The old date, Bagni di Lucca, July 17, 1855, recalled the very hour when it was written, the window of the hotel looking down on the limpid Serchio and over to the chestnut verdure on the hill-side beyond. Again I saw the pale, beautiful face of Read as he had puzzled over the false quantity and forced double-rhyme of the unfortunate final triplet; and what a troop of other memories came along with him! He has now been in his grave at Laurel Hill fourteen years.

Then followed the recollection, not less tender, of the gentle, warm-hearted, large-brained Lanier; of his kind praise qualifying his even kinder criticism; his own friendly but vain assistance. He, too, has joined Read in the land where poets realize their ideals and live their poems. Then the spring morning and the mathematician, for whom in his cradle the Muse contended ere she relinquished him to Science, and who now, D.C.L., and Savilian Professor at Oxford, still adds fresh decades to his "Centuries of Verses" in the intervals of learned memoirs and bewildering calculations, dividing his time between numbers and new theories of numbers. . . . One, two, three! the painter-poet, the musician-poet, and the scientist-poet, all passed, like Banquo's kings, before my spiritual vision. . . .

I re-read the lines through tears; and then—how? I cannot tell!—as rapidly as I write this sentence under my pen, I reconstructed the obdurate ending,—no longer perverse. The poem was finished, after thirty-one years. I do not expect the reader to think it worth that length of candle. I am very far from doing so myself; but I cannot forbear a modest exultation, a feeling akin to the joy of the woman in the parable who said, "Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost!"

I have only one thing more to add, and that is to the editor, and not to the reader:

Dear and Respected Sir,—

My friend your predecessor was accustomed to accept whatever lucubrations in prose I might send to *Lippincott's Magazine*. I own that he as invariably returned those which were in verse. Will you consent, under the circumstances, to depart from that line of his customary rule, and print the excuse for the above reminiscences?—

THE STATUE.

AN ALLEGORY.

There's a book which lieth open
That no student e'er hath read;
There's a path through woods and valleys
Knowing naught of human tread;
And a landscape, fair and golden,
Where beneath the branches olden
Lies a mutilated head.

In that book unnumbered authors
Write as for their daily bread;
Down that unknown path are gazing
Men with doubting and with dread;
And forever for them calling,
Soothing some and some appalling,
Cries that mutilated head.

But the time comes when that volume,
Written, shall be also read,
And when through that haunted valley
Every footstep shall have sped:
Then, within the radiant portal,
Will—a statue fair, immortal—
Rise the mutilated head.

John R. Tait.

THE SCHOOL-BOY AS A MICROCOSM.

THE school-master's desk is his Olympus. From that serene height he looks down calm and unmoved upon the struggles of the little world beneath him, seeing its ambitions, its hopes, its fears, its joy in success, its grief in failure, but not sharing them. If he discards the classic spirit of repose for the modern temper of investigation, and begins to observe what goes on about him, he finds at work there the same forces that move the greater world for which the less is the training ground; and he amuses and instructs himself by watching in that narrow circle the play of impulses which, in a wider field, control the nations; as one may see the struggle for existence among the animalcula that swarm and breed and die under the cover-glass of a microscope. Let the school-master but follow the doctrine of *laissez-faire* with regard to the out-of-school life of his pupils, and he will see a spontaneous society formed among them. Customs will quickly take root, and before long will grow into law; political institutions will appear; and he will soon have before his eyes a rudimentary state, in which he may objectively, and, if he choose, experimentally, study early law and custom, rights, and morals,—the topics, in a word, with which political philosophers have to deal. More fortunate than the philosophers, he will find his position almost as good for investigation as that of the biologist; for, like him, the school-master has the objects of his research upon his dissecting-table.

The school-master at McDonogh has been thus favored. He has seen the formation and development of the state, and now records an episode in its history.

Thirteen years ago the present population first appeared at McDonogh. Until that time scarcely a single boy inhabited the square mile of land which the twenty-one McDonogh boys then invaded, overran, and occupied. Having established themselves securely and comfortably in the school-house, they turned their attention, some of them wholly, others in a less degree, to the exploration and enjoyment of their new domain. It was then late autumn. The chestnuts had all disappeared, but the less perishable walnuts still lay upon the ground where they had fallen, many times too numerous for the industrious squirrels to carry all of them away. The persimmons hung in abundance upon the trees, their vigorous acidity suppressed by the frost, and replaced by a vapid sweetness, tempting to the indiscriminating palates of the invaders. In the undergrowth that edged the fences, in the rough tangle of blackberry-vines that skirted the ditches, and in every copse and stubble-field, the boys put into flight before them the "cotton-tail," whose tender flesh is a delicacy of no mean repute in the birthplace of the explorers, "the gastronomic centre of the universe." As the new-comers pushed their way along the banks of Gwyn's Falls and Horsehead Run, their keen eyes soon observed on the mud the sharply-cut footprints of raccoons and mink; and occa-

sionally some fortunate hunter dimly saw the curiously-ringed tail of the former among the dark branches overhead, and passed a delightful quarter of an hour in a vain effort to take it as a trophy of his skill in woodcraft. When "the time of the singing of birds" came on, a new delight was spread before the lads who frequented the woods, and the hunters of beasts became robbers of nests. As the air turned mild enough to permit the anglers to sit upon the banks of the streams, they improved their skill and drew up black mullets, with heads armed with spikes, or wriggling, mud-haunting eels. At the same season the squirrels began, as Mr. Gilbert says,—

To indulge in the felicity
Of unbounded domesticity.

But, sadly for their parental affections, their household arrangements soon came to the notice of the young-eyed explorers, who carried off the little ones of the unhappy rodents to languish in a neglected captivity, or, more happily, but less often, to become the favored and vivacious pets of careful and indulgent masters.

Thus in the midst of plenty the founders of the state passed through their golden age, or, to use the term of a famous but now discredited school of political thinkers, the population lived as near as human beings can to that state of nature dear to the heart of Rousseau. The woods and fields then supplied, for all who chose to take them, an abundance of nuts and of game, and each boy helped himself to what he wanted, with no restricting considerations of *meum* and *tuum*. There were the nuts, which he had only to gather; there were the rabbits, which he had only to catch; the eggs, which he had only to find. The products of the region were free to all, and all had a common right to them. Private property was recognized only in the special objects which each inhabitant took at will from the common store furnished by the land which all owned in common.

It is extremely interesting and deeply suggestive to notice how this primitive condition passed away, and how private property in definite portions of the common domain came to be established. In watching this process we shall see go on before us, with the rapidity of the movements that take place in the field of the microscope, that usually slow revolution which has apparently formed a part of the history of every nation whose development has gone very far,—namely, the substitution of private property in land for common property. We shall observe changes comparable in every particular, except in the insignificance of the interests affected, to the complete alteration of adult society studied and described by Sir Henry Maine and Emile de Laveleye. We shall see the disappearance of that form of ownership which the socialists of to-day would have us now return to after more than a thousand years of progress away from it, and the evolution of that against which Henry George so vehemently and eloquently cries out, the "beast" of Herr Most's wild ravings.

The great change from common to private property took place among the young citizens of our rudimentary state in consequence of

the increase of population, that potent factor in so many economic revolutions. The score of boys with which the school was opened soon grew to twoscore, and within a year, at the ripening of the next crop, there were fifty hungry seekers after nuts trying to satisfy their wants from the trees within school bounds. The chestnuts were plentiful enough to supply all demands, but the walnuts were far less abundant, and the competition for the possession of the trees became very keen. The primitive condition of the golden age, in which each boy had only to help himself, quickly disappeared in the state of scarcity that followed the great increase of population, and almost every one, in order to insure his getting a share of the crop, attempted to possess himself of at least one tree. This instituted a reign of force, in which violence was tempered only by the weak consciences of healthy boys of sixteen and under. From this condition of anarchy, but by steps which I am unable fully to describe, the citizens of our rudimentary state soon emerged into a reign of law, in which private property was recognized and individual rights were defined. Of course, as in all primitive communities, the law was customary law, not written statutes.

The process of this development of order from chaos was nearly as follows. In the earlier stages of their economic progress the boys started out in parties of three or four, whenever they fancied the walnuts were ripe, each party intent upon shaking the fruit from at least one tree and harvesting it for winter. We may readily believe that two such groups often fixed their minds upon the same tree as the object of their efforts. In such a case the first party to begin work, according to the analogies presented by the world outside, would have the better title to the use of the tree; and, according to the practice of both men and boys, the first takers could be dispossessed only after a fight. It is not surprising, therefore, that the boys came to respect the rights of the first takers of a tree to an unrestricted enjoyment of its fruit. But the community has given this right an enlargement which is quite remarkable, and which has had very important effects upon the history of the state we are studying.

This enlargement is a consequence of the conditions in which the crop is gathered. The first step of the process of harvesting is a laborious one. It consists in climbing among the branches, and, with a great deal of hard work, shaking the nuts down upon the ground. If carried to completion in a large tree by forcing down all the fruit, the process would require some hours of severe exertion, at the end of which the harvesters would naturally feel inclined to leave their field of labor and recuperate themselves at the pantry door and on the ball-field. I may add, parenthetically and explanatorily, that a very tired boy just in from work is much refreshed by first swallowing a crust and then violently "running the bases." It is to the credit of the community under description that its moral sense will not suffer a harvester, thus enjoying his well-earned respite from the toil of climbing and shaking, to be deprived of his property by any one who may come along during his temporary absence and feel tempted to pick the nuts up from the ground where they have been so laboriously deposited. But the custom goes one step further in order to protect this form of

personal property; and it is this second aspect of the matter which more particularly invites attention. If the harvesters became wearied out when they had stripped a tree of only a part of its fruit, and left that portion lying upon the ground, it might be supposed that any subsequent nut-hunter would be permitted to possess himself of what still remained upon the tree; but in fact he is allowed to do this only under such restrictions that he seldom cares to avail himself of the limited privilege; and, consequently, a partial shaking usually gives the first comer full possession of the tree, with all that it bears. The explanation is that when the nuts are shaken from the trees they are scattered all over the ground beneath, and those sent down by the second comers inevitably become mingled with those belonging to the first, thus bringing loss upon one or the other, and producing quarrels and fights. The citizens of the rudimentary state do not regard a breach of the peace as so serious a matter as it is considered in more highly developed society, but they see the disadvantages that accompany a fracas, and prefer to avoid them. To prevent brawls, therefore, and at the same time to protect the rights of priority, the custom has become fixed, that the boys who reach a tree already partially stripped while the first shakers are absent shall shake no nuts to the ground until they first pile up all that may be lying scattered under the boughs. This picking up is, however, a tiresome job, painful to the bent back and discoloring to the fingers. Moreover, it takes so long a time that there is a considerable possibility of the first shaker's returning before it is completed; in which case the equities of the parties, as the lawyers say, would not be very clear, and for which the customary law does not provide any satisfactory mode of settlement. Consequently the boys who, in their wanderings, come to a tree already partly harvested generally pass it by untouched; and they who first climb a tree thereby get possession of the whole of its product, and in reality make it their private property for that year, and entirely withdraw it from the common domain.

Very industrious and enterprising boys, the Philistines of that community, who are never unrepresented at McDonogh, take advantage of this custom to possess themselves of a large share of the walnut-crop; far more than they seem fairly entitled to on the theory of common ownership, but not more than the principles of the school of *laissez-faire* permit the possessors of "good business habits" to obtain in the outside world. Not that there is any dishonesty about it, for I believe the harvest to be carried on without any trickery or violence. But some are so much better provided than the rest with shrewdness, skill, agility, and swiftness of foot that they obtain ten or twenty times the share of the others. Two, or three, or four of these well-equipped youths join in a partnership, and on the day fixed by common consent of the school for the opening of the harvest each of them will run as fast as possible to the different trees in the neighborhood, climb up, shake down about a bushel of nuts, descend, rush to another tree, and repeat the process there. All the trees thus partially shaken, perhaps six or seven of them, become for the season the property of the firm; because, as explained before, a partial stripping of a tree gives posses-

sion of all its fruit. Two or three good harvesters will thus become owners of sixty or seventy bushels of nuts, part of which they will eat during the winter, and part they will sell to their slower-footed or lazier school-fellows, whose share of the common crop is nothing at all.

Although the community thus permits individuals to acquire at will what we may call great fortunes in walnuts, wealth far out of proportion to their relative numbers, yet the state still retains a certain measure of control over the trees, and thus shows that it regards the old idea of common property as still living. This fact is clearly shown in the regulations made by what we may call the tribal assembly as to the time for beginning the harvest. In very early times it was found that the keen competition for the possession of the trees led certain boys to go out and begin harvest in September, before the nuts had ripened. To prevent the great waste thus caused, it was agreed among the boys that no harvesting should be thereafter permitted before a suitable date, to be annually agreed upon. The fixing of this day is always a matter of interest to the community, and is sometimes the cause of a great political excitement. In 1884 the school was divided into two parties, favoring different dates. The one party found its leaders among the members of the debating society, or the literary class, as they would be called in the outer world; the other faction was under the lead of the landed aristocracy, who were charged by their opponents with the intention of subverting the rights of the popular assembly and setting up an oligarchy. When the question came to a decision, the literary clique posted upon the wall of the play-room a resolution naming the date they favored as the time for beginning the harvest, and invited all to sign their names below in token of support of their proposition. The aristocracy, however, made active efforts, and carried the day by a very large majority.

The community regards the trees as common property, to be annually distributed among the citizens. The title to the trees acquired by shaking them expires with the year; and in the next harvest the fruit again becomes the possession of all, to be shared only after permission has been granted by the tribe. By this arrangement the great inequalities of wealth brought about in any given year are partially remedied in succeeding seasons, and class-distinctions between the rich and the poor are prevented.

In other forms of property, however, a permanent right of possession has been established, and great inequality of condition has resulted, with a consequent "progress and poverty" humorously interesting to reflective outsiders, but serious enough to the "McDonogh boys" themselves.

The revolution in the system of property rights has gone farthest in the changes effected in the estates in the "rabbit-land." In these the old rights of common have entirely disappeared, and new customs have grown up which recognize land as private property. The new system has been so far-perfected as to get nearly all the good land, that is, good as a home for rabbits, into the hands of a few great landlords; but in late years a socialistic party has appeared among the poor boys,

and demanded a redistribution of what was once the land of all the tribe.

Every one in the tribe, whether monopolist or socialist, traces all titles back to the eponymous hero of the clan, the philanthropist, John McDonogh, who bequeathed his wealth to found the agricultural school. "Our farm," as the clansmen call it, is "ours" because "he left it to us;" a title none the less valid in their eyes because it rests upon a fiction. "Superior and malefic forces, embodied in principals, teachers, and overseers, may prevent the full enjoyment of our rights, but we nevertheless have from our founder a free range over fields and woods, and we still own the wild fruit and the game." Such might have been the course of a clansman's reflections years ago, before individualism had made the conquest of tribal feeling which it has now accomplished. In the early days every privilege, every right of property that any tribesman enjoyed was equally free to all the rest. The rabbits scampering through the undergrowth were the game of all; all had a common of ventry in the woods; and all felt equal interest and zeal in expelling the neighboring aliens who sometimes made incursions into the "common mark," to trap or to hunt. Hence, during the earliest year of the settlement every tribesman felt free to set his box-trap where he pleased, scented with an alluring onion. But during the first year the population grew with a rapidity even greater than that maintained by Malthus; and the success of the first trappers tempted an even greater number to embark in the pursuit than the increase of population alone would account for. Therefore the time was not long before the traps became more numerous and more closely placed than an eager trapper could approve. In one of the first seasons it seems to have been agreed upon by common consent that no two traps belonging to different owners should be put very close together. The feeling that caused this step was much the same as that which acted in forming the customs that govern the gathering of the walnuts,—namely, a sentiment of respect for the title of the first comer. The trapper who had labored to make his heavy box-trap, to carry it painfully over rough fields and through tangled briars to set it in the spot chosen by the aid of all his skill in reading the signs of the woods, should not be subjected to the loss of all this work by some laggard who might feel inclined to put a trap at the same place, which his own unaided sagacity would never have selected as a fitting one. There was nothing fanciful in the idea of the loss of game by undue proximity of the traps. The trappers knew that it was the habit of the "Jim Dink," as they familiarly called him, to move through his haunts along well-marked paths; and they took advantage of this peculiarity in deciding where to put their traps, which they always placed in the paths that seemed to be most frequented. A second trap put in the path with the first would of course stop a rabbit moving towards it from that side, and would thus interfere with the catch of the trapper who earliest occupied the ground. Consequently it was the general feeling that a tribesman who had set a trap in an unoccupied place was entitled to the undisturbed use of a circle about it some forty or more yards in diameter.

The adoption of this very reasonable proposition was the first step

toward the entire destruction of the old system of common ownership of "rabbit-land." This unhappy result of a remedial statute is in remarkable accord with the observation that law-makers who have tried to do one thing by a given means are generally found to have done a different thing by other means.

A rabbit-trap, as most country-folks know, is a long, narrow box, generally made of thick plank, by preference oak, in order to resist the gnawing of the captive rodents, who, though not nearly so effective in the use of their jaws as a domestic rat, can still do much for liberty. Such a box will long remain proof against the elements, and will lie upon the ground for several years without suffering any considerable deterioration. Hence no one ever collects his traps when the season is over, but leaves them where they have been set, and where they will be found ready for use when the frosts of the next November cause a partial famine at the home of Jim Dink. This custom working with the rule above mentioned produced this result,—namely, that a boy who had once set a trap in any spot acquired and kept possession of that spot year after year. As his trap already lay upon the ground, he had a better title to the land about it than any boy coming out later with a trap under his arm; and in order to retain possession year after year he had only to be sure that his trap remained upon the ground. Consequently, so far as concerned the small circle around each trap, the old system of common rights disappeared, and was replaced by a system of private property in land.

A still more remarkable result was the monopolizing of the land by three great holders united. To use the vigorous slang of current politics, land-sharks swallowed up the public domain. This far-reaching event was produced in a way which I shall now endeavor to explain. But it should be remembered that the causes of any great revolution in social habits, such as this change from common land-holding to a monopolizing of the soil, are always many and various; and it should be considered enough if the explanation offered, while perhaps incomplete, is yet correct as far as it goes. Such I shall try to make it.

Even in the days of the first settlers there prevailed no equality of condition, but merely equality of opportunity, *la carrière ouverte aux talents*. In those times the land was free to all, to be sure, but there was nothing to prevent an industrious settler from making and setting twice as many or even ten times as many traps as his easy-going-rival who spent most of the pleasant October afternoons upon the ball-field. Nor was there any legislation to regulate the date at which trapping should begin, like the laws that fixed the time of the beginning of the walnut-harvest. If any thrifty member of the community chose to spend two or three weeks of the autumn making traps and setting them in the best places, while others were intent on fun, there was nothing to prevent his carrying out such a plan; and a few boys did carry it out. From the first, too, differences of skill existed among the trappers. Consequently there were very early great inequalities in the distribution of wealth; but any boy who felt dissatisfied could, in the first seasons, by exercising his industry move from the poorer class into the richer.

But at a later day this became much more difficult. When private

property in land was recognized, every spot fit for setting a trap in was owned by some one; and boys who entered the school after that time found themselves without any share in the wealth which their predecessors had divided. No matter what their talents as woodsmen might be, no matter how keen their appetites for roasted rabbit, they were entirely debarred from using any portion of the land which, according to the theory of the tribe, John McDonogh had bequeathed to them all. Their only resource was to buy a portion of the soil from some of the prior holders; and this was often done.

The power of selling rabbit-land was exercised very early; and many interesting contracts of sale are told of. Asaph had come into possession of a large and highly productive tract, embracing Mason's ditches, a ditch near Kelly's, and Sheely's woods. He sold a two-thirds interest in this property to two enterprising but landless egg-hunters. Frank and Gilly, the "parties of the second part," paid for their share by giving Asaph one-third of their collection of eggs already accumulated, and a promise of one-third of all that might afterwards be collected by the joint efforts of all three; that is, by giving him one-third interest in their business. Upon another occasion, Ham Miller had need of more traps than he could conveniently make by his own unaided efforts, and, therefore, employed Johnny Schutz as his carpenter; whose services he recompensed by giving him the right to set eight traps forever in Painter's Swamp, the whole of which, with other large and valuable tracts, Ham then owned.

Thus the buying and selling of land, the catching, eating, and selling of rabbits, went on pleasantly enough for the prosperous members of the community. But all landholders must submit to the hand of Father Time, and at last the longest school-days come to an end. Hence there came a day when the rich had to consider what was to become of their swamps and woods when they were gone from the places that once had known them. Naturally enough, they determined to bequeath their possessions to their friends whom they left behind. As in the case of Asaph, Frank, and Gilly noticed above, the trappers were commonly associated in firms of three or four members; and when one member had to quit the pursuit in which they had long been pleasantly united, it was altogether meet that he should choose a common friend of all the partners as a successor, rather than leave his property to be seized by any chance comer, who might be an enemy to the friends of the departed. Nor did the general body of citizens lay any claim to property thus bequeathed. To outsiders it mattered not at all whether the rabbits burrowing in the banks of Mason's ditches were shared by Hall, Frank, and Gilly, or by Frank, Gilly, and Pattison; and individual property seemed so firmly rooted that it perhaps occurred to no one to demand that the share of the decedent should again become common land. As it was to be the private estate of some one, it might as well go to Hall's legatee. Thus testamentary rights came to be recognized; and the opportunity for a return to common ownership afforded by the departure of the first holders in severalty was permitted to pass by. The recognition of private rights even went so far as to produce what I shall venture to call, borrowing

the terminology of the legal profession, incorporeal hereditaments. For example, when Johnny Schutz, the carpenter, departed from his McDonogh life, he was still in the enjoyment of the right to set eight traps in Painter's Swamp granted to him by the great proprietor, Ham Miller. This right Johnny bequeathed to his friend Hall, who long exercised the privilege thus conferred, and bequeathed it, at his last day, to a successor. A hereditament, a lawyer would say, implies an heir; and in the jurisprudence of the McDonogh tribe the surviving partners of the deceased apparently occupy this position. The point has not been authoritatively decided, having arisen but once, and being still in dispute; but a large landholder whose experience entitles him to the respect of an expert conveyancer was of the opinion that property which, by some odd carelessness, the owner had not mentioned in his will, was not open to seizure by a rapacious trapper who attempted to take possession, but properly belonged to the business associates of the deceased.

The most striking result of the unrestricted exercise of the rights of private property in the land at McDonogh was that within eight years of the first appearance of the system of individual ownership almost all of the valuable land of the community fell, by devise or purchase, into the hands of three big and shrewd monopolists, who became the landed aristocracy of McDonogh. It is not necessary to believe that any positive fraud or violence was committed in bringing about this consummation, since we can explain it by supposing a state of facts which actually existed,—namely, the free play of competition such as we see in the adult world. I am strongly of the belief that the differences between the "business abilities" of different boys are quite as great as the differences between those of men; and if space permitted I could give several remarkable examples in support of the truth of this impression, but I shall confine myself to a single one. Some years ago a number of the school-boys entered the business of making taffy and selling it to their school-fellows. The nearest shop was more than a mile away, and its inaccessibility almost withdrew its owner from competition with the home manufacturers. The market was therefore open to the latter, and a dozen or more entered it at various times. Two of these, who were associated in a firm, were far more successful than any of the rest, and by skill in manufacture and pertinacity in drumming up trade they obtained almost a monopoly of the business. I have the best evidence that they doubled their money in every venture, and increased their capital in a single winter from a few cents to more than twenty-five dollars. The same sort of ability was devoted by the same two boys to accumulating a large estate in rabbit-land, and they had the same success.

The influence of the three great capitalists over the rest of the inhabitants became paramount, and their society was much courted. Dives fared sumptuously every day during the trapping season, and any polite attention accepted by him was rewarded by a gift from the dish of rabbit before him at breakfast. A place could always be found for him in the games, all of which, I must admit, he played extremely well. His society was so much courted that he had dependants attached

to his person ready to attend to the business needed in managing his estate. The three great landlords found their possessions too large to be properly looked after by themselves alone; and they therefore hired several helpers to visit some of their traps at regular intervals and to bring home the captured rabbits. Ham Miller hired Winkum to perform this duty in certain portions of Painter's Swamp; while Maud, whose name indicates not sex, but a certain peach-bloom complexion supposed to be girlish, was employed to manage the traps set in Mason's ditches, and was paid as a salary one-fourth of the animals caught. His pay amounted, in the year I have in mind, to four whole rabbits and some odd legs. Such contracts were made with several of the boys; and some underlings attached themselves to the retinues of the great merely for the sake of the crumbs that dropped from their table, or in the hope of being remembered in their wills.

With a number of retainers at their backs, the rich became a power in political affairs, and, as previously noticed, were sometimes able to control the tribal assembly. In consequence of this preponderant influence of theirs, it at one time seemed probable that the old popular form of government would be displaced by a plutocracy; but all fear of this result is now dissipated, at least for the present, because of the much more general distribution of wealth which has recently been effected.

The three monopolists, finding it difficult to maintain the concentration of their landed property, threw it upon the market or divided it among their friends. This was not done altogether of their own free will, however. As the time of their departure from school life drew near, the various hints they had let fall of what would follow upon the break-up of the triumvirate finally produced a report that a single boy was to be made their sole legatee, lord of the manor of McDonogh, and monarch of all he surveyed. This rumor inflamed the smouldering discontent of the landless portion of the community to such a degree that a socialistic party was formed. This body began an agitation of the land question, and demanded a return to the old customs of common ownership, either immediately or upon the demise of the triumvirs. This movement seems to have been supported by, and perhaps may have originated in, the debating society, which took the part of friend of the poor and representative of the principle of "government by discussion," like the Jacobite clubs of Paris in the last century. The stir thus produced seems to have given some alarm to the monopolists; but at the same time an event happened which made their difficulties somewhat less, and they managed their affairs so prudently that the rights of private owners took no hurt. One of the most active of the socialistic orators obtained a share in a monopoly of trapping musk-rats which had been recently established,

And the subsequent proceedings
Interested him no more.

Soon after two of the triumvirate quit the scene of their activity, in anticipation of which event they divided their estate into lots, some

of which they sold and others they disposed of, as the lawyers say, by gifts *causa mortis*. The third lord was not long in following their example in all respects. Thus a considerable part of the population, perhaps one-fifth, again obtained an interest in the land, and when this happened the agitation of the socialists ceased. Private property in land still flourishes, and at present there seems to be no sentiment against it.

John Johnson, Jr.

AT NIGHTFALL.

THE misty sunset fades away ;
In murky shadow ends the day ;
And underneath a rain-blurred sky
The river sullenly flows by.

I would not care, dear heart, how black
The night fell, could it bring you back :
Could but your eyes look into mine,
There were no need for stars to shine.

But, ah, the pity and the pain !
Nor day nor dark, nor sun nor rain,
Nor any wind from a far shore,
Brings what I long for any more.

Light is a word : the smallest thing
That beats the air with viewless wing
Scarce in its sighing breath is stirred,
Yet hearts are broken, by a word.

Would that I might the word unsay !
Beneath a smile I hide away
My broken heart from prying eyes
When common daylight round me lies.

But when the time of dusk and dew
Brings all the old desire for you,
Ah me ! the idle smiles are done,
Unchecked I let the salt tears run.

And then I wonder, is it so
With you, my darling ? Once I know
You loved me. Is there no regret,
Nor wish for me that lingers yet ?

O murky night, O starless sky,
Could you to my desire reply,
How fair as fairest day would be
Your dark and desolate space to me !

Mary Bradley.

PRIZE ESSAY NO. 8.

SOCIAL LIFE AT AMHERST COLLEGE.

HOW shall I best picture the daily life of an Amherst student? Let us follow one—an average man, no “dig,” and yet no idler—through a Wednesday in term-time. His day begins at a quarter after seven, with an alarm from his clock or a call from some wakeful friend. After a hurried toilet, he leaves his room, and by five minutes’ brisk walking he reaches his “table,” where, in company with twenty classmates and friends, he sits down to breakfast. It is now twenty minutes before eight, and the meal is summarily disposed of without sauce of conversation or laughter. Eight o’clock finds him in his seat at chapel, panting with his run up the hill and wondering whether the monitor has noted his tardiness. He has now fifteen minutes of repose, which, not being in a devotional frame of mind, he employs in gazing listlessly about at the three hundred and fifty fellow-students gathered with him in the great room. He finds this an excellent time for composing his thoughts and making his plans for the day, and at last, remembering with a start that the society meeting last night prevented all study, he begins hastily to look over his first lesson. Chapel over, he goes at once to recitation, and the rest of the morning is occupied with lectures, recitations, and study. Of course he must get the morning mail, and then—well, when is one to read the paper, if not in the morning? And if a fellow drops in for a moment’s talk,—why, one can’t be rude. But, as a rule, our friend passes the morning in study and recitations. At dinner he unbends. While at breakfast he had scarce a nod for his bosom friend, he now has an abundance of words for all; well-seasoned words they are, too, for two years of repartee put some edge on the dullest mind. After dinner, down town; then, with two or three friends, to his room, there to while away the time till the real business of the afternoon commences. Wednesday and Saturday afternoons are half-holidays at Amherst, and so our friend has his choice, if it be autumn, between tennis, an amateur game of foot-ball, a botanical or geological “tramp,” an excursion to the fruit-regions of Sunderland, and a drive to Northampton, with a call at Smith College. He probably prefers tennis; and when, by patiently awaiting his turn, he has secured a place on his society court, the afternoon passes quickly enough. Supper over, an hour or so is spent in discussing college affairs, either at his society house or perhaps on the new college fence, and then study is in order till the books are put to flight by the entrance of some friend with an invitation to come down to “Frank’s,” a comfortable restaurant hotel, much patronized by the boys. Here the evening is fitly closed by a bit of game or some cream with lemonade,—Amherst is a temperance town as far as students are concerned,—and very late our average friend lies down, to prepare for another day more or less like this one.

A lazy life, you say. And so it looks. The hard study, the high

thinking, yes, and the headaches, do not appear on the surface, and it is little wonder that the ease and idleness of student life have become a proverb and a byword among the towns-people. These, however, can well afford to look with equanimity upon the shortcomings of the students, for the little village of about two thousand inhabitants draws all its sustenance, I had almost said, from the college. And indeed they show remarkable forbearance. Midnight serenades and noisy disturbances of all kinds are calmly endured, bonfires are allowed to burn in the middle of one of the main streets, pilferings of fruit go unnoticed, and in general the doings of the boys are passed over with serene good nature. When, however, a cheap play or concert is "broken up" by the students, the "townies" find it hard to be reconciled to the loss of their evening's entertainment, and their indignation voices itself in threats and denunciations. As a rule, the relations between "town" and "gown" are very pleasant, though "town" occasionally feels annoyance and "gown" does not attempt to conceal a certain feeling of scorn.

Most persons, I think, have an idea that every college town abounds in queer characters, made much of by the students, and in odd places of resort, where the boys congregate for no special reason and where they spend hours in doing nothing. I suspect that such a state of things exists only in the stories of Elijah Kellogg and in the truly remarkable imagination of the writer of college novels. It surely does not exist at Amherst. Queer characters there are, no doubt, as in every town, and some few have been nicknamed by the boys; but even these latter are in no way identified with college life and interests. And as for places of resort, the catalogue is limited to a single one, "Frank's," which is neither odd nor romantic. A prosperous hotel of the cheaper class, kept by a generous, accommodating landlord, always a good friend to the boys, it has come to be the favorite place for getting the little extras of an edible nature that are so acceptable as evening lunches. Here on almost any evening one may find a contented lot of students, filling up the small dining-room and keeping Katie and Annie busy with orders for the various delicacies that the season permits. It is needless to say that ceremony is thrown to the dogs: each enjoys himself after his own fashion, and the whole atmosphere of the place invites to relaxation. Yet the jollification is, as a rule, quiet, and there is none of the boisterous hilarity and rough joking that might be expected.

Passing from the favorite restaurant to the regular boarding clubs, we shall find little of interest. All the clubs, with a single exception, are managed by towns-people, for Amherst has no Memorial Hall, nor have the self-managing clubs proved successful there. The landlady fixes the price of board, regulates the quality, and takes all comers until the "table" is full. In numbers the clubs vary from six to forty-five. At one or two of the smaller clubs the serving is done in the family style, but, as a rule, the carving is done in the kitchen and the landlady does not appear. From one end of the term to another the average student does not sit down at table with ladies; and the consequent relapse into barbarism is sometimes very noticeable. Under the Amherst plan very little can be done in the way of choosing table-mates. One finds his companions selected for him as a result of chance and the gradations in

the price of board, and, rude though this self-adjustment must be, it often happens that one's associations at table are both pleasant and profitable.

In the matter of rooming, a great change has come about within a few years. Time was when none but unfortunate Freshmen roomed elsewhere than "in college;" but, owing to the increasing dilapidation of the college dormitories and to the rapid increase of secret-society houses, there has been a constant migration from College Hill to the village. So far has the movement progressed that only twenty-five are now left to occupy the two vast brick buildings which in former times were crowded to their utmost, together with a third even larger. In vain are the dormitory-rooms, with all their romantic associations, offered at ruinously low prices: the degenerate student of the present time prefers comfort to romance, even when romance, accompanied by an unlimited supply of fresh air, may be had at nominal rates.

Of the students rooming in town, about one hundred and ten live in society houses. These are houses owned by the Amherst chapters of the various Greek fraternities. Bought or built by alumni subscriptions, they are under the legal control of some corporate body of alumni, but practically the management is given over to the undergraduates. Seven in number, they differ most widely among themselves in age, architecture, size, situation, convenience, and elegance. Some were built for the purpose, the rest have been altered from dwelling-houses. In addition to the secret lodge-room, the parlors and reading-room, each house has accommodations for from ten to eighteen students. They are really college homes; and, forming as they do the recognized centres of society life, they are of the utmost importance, not only as influencing individual character, but as giving to the social life of the college its distinctive tone. Most society men take rooms in these houses for the last two or three years of the course; very few indeed fail to pass at least one year within their walls. Occasionally, by reason of friendship or expediency, a Freshman is admitted; but woe to that Freshman if he be what the name implies. It is hard to conceive a course better calculated to remove conceit than a year in an Amherst society-house.

But description of the daily routine of Amherst life and accounts of the habits of the student body are but incidental to our theme. Coming to the more particular discussion of the social life of the college, I must at the outset acknowledge a lack which is perhaps common to all large schools in small towns,—namely, the lack of social advantages outside the limits of the college. Pleasant and refined people are by no means lacking, and some young men are so fortunate as to gain admittance to families which would anywhere rank among the best; but such good fortune is quite exceptional. At church fairs and similar gatherings the student is warmly welcomed, especially if he can add to the entertainment by playing or singing, and by improving such opportunities he may make acquaintances and may even secure "bids" to some small and half formal gatherings during the winter. But the society which is entered through such portals is neither very great in extent nor attractive in kind. A better opportunity for the socially

inclined is that offered by the families of the professors. Charming acquaintances may be made in this circle, and not a few warm friendships are begun. The faculty have at times made kind attempts to encourage social intercourse of this kind, and I think they are heartily glad to have the fellows call; but, whether it be due to a feeling of constraint as regards their instructors or to general diffidence, very, very few ever call at a professor's house save on business. Even a bright man may pass through his four years without making a single calling acquaintance: as a matter of fact, most do finish their course without receiving more social culture than is gained by attending a society reception perhaps once a year, together with two or three gatherings during Senior year.

One important social factor I have omitted to mention. Seven miles distant, just across the valley, in Northampton, is Smith College, one of the leading woman's colleges of the East, and a factor not to be ignored in any problem that concerns Amherst. Drawing students, as it does, from all parts of the country, it is only natural that Amherst men should find many acquaintances among its undergraduates; one introduces another, and it becomes easy for an agreeable fellow to make friends. Given friends and credit with the livery-stables, the extent to which one shall carry his calling becomes simply a question of time and inclination. Very few go through college without making their bow at Smith at least once; about a fifth keep up acquaintance by more or less frequent calls; while six or eight from each class drive over with admirable regularity once or twice each week. All this in the way of calling, for, with the exception of the *tête-à-tête*, very few social inducements are held out by our cousins at "Hamp." A reception in the winter, a concert or two, and a general reception at Commencement complete the list. The winter reception, or "walk-about," is the object of much mild ridicule at Amherst; but it is well attended, notwithstanding, and for a week or so before its occurrence no question is more common than "Did you get a bid?" For, as this is the one formal reception of the year, and each young lady is allowed to invite a certain number of friends, the invitations come as authoritative certificates of one's standing with his lady friends beyond the river. The enterprising man, however, is not confined to these meagre opportunities for social converse. Driving, under certain conditions, is allowed by the Smith authorities, and it is customary for the fellows to bring their friends to Amherst on occasion of the display of out-door athletics in the fall and the more interesting base-ball games in the spring. Until recently, too, young ladies from the sister college have not infrequently attended Germans and receptions at Amherst; but more stringent rules are now, I believe, in force.

At present the only means of reaching Northampton is by a carriage-drive of an hour over an uninteresting road. Within a year, however, the towns will be connected by railroad, and the two colleges will thus be brought much nearer to each other, a consummation devoutly wished, by the male collegians at least.

Smith College, as I have said, is an important factor in all that concerns Amherst, but its influence is limited. The character of social

life in Amherst is not due at all to outside influences, and is more decided and more distinctive because of the lack of outside society. It is, I think, the resultant of two opposing forces, class spirit and society spirit. As for the first (pardon the paradox), it is chiefly conspicuous by its absence. No complaint is more commonly made in college than the complaint that class spirit is dying out. And there is much to support this belief. True, the two lower classes still manifest their *esprit de corps* in bonfires, cane rushes, and similar performances, and often the feeling between them runs quite high. Not infrequently a particularly harmonious class keeps up its enthusiasm to the last; and, indeed, class banquets after graduation show that class spirit does not die, even in the breasts of alumni. But class spirit as it was twenty or thirty years ago, when the object of all loyalty and the motive of all effort was the class, class spirit such as exists to-day in many colleges, is surely a thing of the past at Amherst. And this change is due to the growth of Greek-letter societies, which have come at length to occupy the first place in the loyalty of the students.

Amherst secret societies are not to be confounded with class societies, like those at Yale, for they are different in every respect, though the names may be the same. At Amherst a man joins his society in Freshman year and continues his connection throughout the four years; at Yale his membership is for a year only, and he may be connected with a different society each year of his course. Many attempts have been made, and are still made, from time to time, to establish class societies at Amherst; but their term of existence is generally very short. The four-year societies find it for their interest to discourage all such organizations, as weakening the bands between their own members: hence the long list of "dead" class societies. At present there is no such society in college, if we except Phi Beta Kappa, which is in no sense social.

The four-year societies are eight in number, representing as many fraternities, and they enroll as members more than three-fourths of the college. As the most able and influential men are chosen for societies, the remaining fourth are practically without influence in college affairs, and the societies meet with no opposition. New members are chosen from the incoming class at the time of the entrance-examinations in spring and fall, and the "campaign," as the annual struggle for recruits is called, often becomes very exciting. Every effort is made to obtain previous information in regard to desirable men and to bring favorable influences to bear upon them. This plan often succeeds, and occasionally desirable men are secured before rival societies have even seen them. As a rule, however, election is the result of work at "campaign" time. When a society man sees a promising-looking Freshman going to examination or on the way to his room, he forthwith button-holes him, and before releasing him makes an appointment for the evening. Calling for him at the appointed time and place, the upper-classman escorts him to the society parlors. Here are gathered most of the members, and for half an hour the tired candidate is talked to, joked with, and sung to, and during all keenly examined. He is then borne away to repeat the ordeal elsewhere. If as the result of several such interviews he is approved, he is asked to "pledge," that is, to promise to join the society.

If all goes well, he is initiated five or six weeks after the beginning of the fall term, with such accompaniment of practical jokes as may seem suited to his case. As a rule, all the societies initiate on the same night, in accordance with previous understanding, and at such times the various parts of the village offer very amusing pantomimes in the way of tree-climbing, barrel-rolling, and other such gymnastics, all performed blind-folded and amid perfect silence. The buffoonery of initiation-night must not, however, be taken as indications of the character of Amherst societies. Contrary to what might be expected, the strongest influences toward industry and morality are those exerted by the Greek-letter societies. Lazy members are stimulated to work for honors, wild fellows are made to behave, and erring ones are punished with a severity from which the faculty would shrink. Capital punishment in society jurisprudence is expulsion from the fraternity, which is not only virtual expulsion from college, but a barrier to success in all other colleges where the Greeks are prominent.

Class spirit is not the only victim to the growing strength of the secret societies: the debating society belongs in the same category. Alexandria and Athens, the open literary societies, founded with the college and for years the centres of fiercest rivalry, rapidly declined as Greek societies strengthened, till at last they have united in the hope of prolonging existence. Thus the centre of literary effort and interest has been gradually transferred from open to secret halls.

More important still, the secret societies are the real centres of the social life of the college. Their fundamental idea is to bring their members as closely together as possible; and it has already been shown how completely this is done by means of the houses. The house is the home of half of the society; for the other half it is a constant resort, both night and day. It is easy to imagine the strength of the union resulting from these class associations, especially in a college where, as at Amherst, there is no outside society to lessen the vigor and intensity of social life among the students themselves. It is easy to see how great must be the influence of organizations which thus control the social life of their members.

Formerly it was not uncommon for members of the same society to eat at a common "table," often in the society house itself. This practice has been entirely abandoned (the last such "table" was given up about two years ago), perhaps because college sentiment, in accord with the catholicity of the times, demands less exclusiveness.

One of the most interesting features of the society system is its relation to village society. Each of the different chapters has its circle of acquaintance in town, and usually considers it a part of its duty to give a reception or entertainment of some kind during the winter. Hardly any undergraduates from rival societies are invited, and the entertainment is considered as the payment of a debt to faculty and town.

I have attempted to describe the two influences which make the Amherst spirit what it is. Either working alone is narrowing, either alone produces an unhealthy spirit in college; working together, they correct each other. Society spirit causes just enough rivalry to destroy that extravagant estimate of classmates and class interests which is pro-

duced by class spirit ; while this latter, on the other hand, prevents the clannishness and narrowness liable to result from society life. The result is a spirit which causes men to take a manly, healthy view of college mates and college life and in general to estimate men and things at their real value. This, indeed, takes away some of the charm and romance of college life, perhaps, but it fits men for the world, and Amherst men have good reason to be proud of the spirit that pervades the social life of their *alma mater*.

R. S. Rounds (Class of '87).

IN SOMNO VERITAS.

I DREAMED I sat in my chamber
And watched the dancing light
Of the blaze upon my hearth-stone,
And the red brands glowing bright.

I listened to the rustle
Of the flames that rose and fell,
And I dreamed I heard a whisper,
A voice I knew full well.

The room no more was lonely,
A presence sweet was there,—
A girlish figure, standing
Beside my own arm-chair.

I dreamed I spoke, and, trembling
Lest she should prove to be
The creature of a vision,
I bade her sit by me.

Her grave brown eyes she lifted,
Her dear hand placed in mine ;
The air was sweet with incense
Of odorous birch and pine.

And as we watched together
Those eager, dancing flames,
We talked of days forgotten,
Called each our childish names.

I dreamed that heaven seemed nearer,
The skies a lovelier blue :
Then—was it still a vision ?—
I dreamed my dream came true !

Willis Boyd Allen.

A SKETCH IN UMBER.

EVERY life has its history: this is the story of Ruth Welch, the placid-faced, silver-haired woman who sat in the September twilight looking out over the moorlands one Saturday evening, and considering many things.

The house faced toward the south. It looked across a little creek that made in from the sea, and it had in its prospect only level heaths to the horizon's edge. On the west stretched the waters of an arm of the Atlantic, and the tides came twice a day around the low cape into the inlet, and the wind blew over the moors; but in all directions one looked upon level wastes. "The Plains," the country-people called them, speaking of them sometimes as "Welch's bogs," or in sections as the "blueb'ry plains" or the "cramb'ry mashes;" and people who lived outside of them regarded the moors as painfully dull.

They were not, too, without some excuse for such an opinion. The rhodora and the "lamb-kill" in spring spread over sections of the waste transient sheets of glowing color, but for the most part the country was either white or brown, and to one not fond of it the effect of the monotone of hue was depressing. The shade of brown varied, changing from a grayish or even greenish brown in midsummer to a sombre, almost uniform umber in autumn, which latter tint now and then during the winter appeared in desolate patches through the flats of snow, until in March the whole plain came to light darker and more forbidding than ever.

All these long months the only break in the dull monochrome of the landscape was the red cottage which still was called "Grandsir' Welch's," although the old man had been dead many a year, and the little garden before it that kept up with old-fashioned flowers a show of bravery until the frosts came. The tint of the old house was dull and dingy, but in so colorless a setting the hue seemed brighter, as a single event might assume undue importance in a monotonous life. If one could have supposed the builder an imaginative man or one given to refinements of sentiment, it might be easy to imagine that when he built his house thus alone in the plains, with not another dwelling in sight and without a break in the level landscape, he felt the need of giving it some color that should protest against the deadly grayness of all around and hearten its owner by its warmth of tone.

So overwhelming were the solitude and the unbroken sameness of the place, however, that an imaginative man would scarcely have chosen it as an abiding-place, although once involved in its powerful fascination he would have been held to his life's end. By what accident Grandsir' Welch's grandfather had chosen to build here half a score of miles from the little fishing village which stood to the people of that region for the world, no one knew, and very likely no one cared. People thereabout concerned themselves little with reasons for anything, facts being all they found mental grasp sufficient to hold. Once

established, in the plains, however, there was no especial cause to suppose the family would not continue to live on there until its course was interrupted either by extinction or by the arrival of the Judgment-Day.

Extinction was not very far off now, since only this white-haired woman remained to bear the name. Her mother had died in the daughter's infancy. She had never adapted herself to the silence and loneliness of the moors, and her people over at the village declared that she had "died of the plains," and it is possible that they were right. Ruth's father, when she was still but a child, had been lost at sea, and the girl had been cared for by her grandfather and the old serving-woman Bethiah, who had once been supposed to be a hired girl, but had ended by being so thoroughly identified with the family that her surname was wellnigh forgotten, and she was designated, when she was spoken of at all, as Bethiah Welch.

The child grew much in the same way as grew the houseleeks in the boxes beside the southern door, very slowly and dully. Once or twice she went for a few months to stay with an aunt in the village ten miles away, it being the unanimous opinion of her relatives that, as the Welches always had known how to read and write, it was proper that something should be done for Ruth's education; and the village school was the only educational means known in the region. The girl pined for home, however, and was never content away from the red house. Perhaps by a strange perversity of circumstance the home-longing of the mother was in the child transformed into a clinging fondness for the place where the former was so lonely and alien. The low, level moors were necessary to Ruth's life: in their colorless monotony she somehow found the complement for her uneventful life. Perhaps the very dulness developed her imagination, as special organs appear in animals whose abnormal conditions of existence render them needful. If this were so, it was no less true that the moors absorbed whatever mental life they stimulated, until the girl seemed hardly less a part of them than the knolls of leathery shrubs, the scattered, shallow pools, the tufts of coarse grass, or the whispering voices of the wind which all night long and every night were hurrying to and fro, concerned with tidings which perhaps came from the sea that forever moaned along the moorland's edges.

Little conscious imagination had Ruth at nineteen; and it was at nineteen that the single, trifling event of her life occurred. She was a maiden by no means uncomely. She was not educated in any conventional sense of the term, but her life alone with her grandfather and old Bethiah and the great brown moors had bred in her a certain sweet gravity which was not without its charm, had there been but those to see who could appreciate it.

Along the front of the house ran a bench, where people seldom sat, but where the milk-pans dried in the sun, a gleaming row; and one sunny morning late in September the flash of their shimmer caught the eye of a skipper who in his yacht in the bay studied the horizon with his glass. He was not yet past those years when a man still finds amusement in imitating fate and nature by yielding to his impulses;

the gleam suggested pleasant draughts of fresh milk; and, without more ado, he headed the trig little craft in which he and a brother artist were skirting the coast of the Gulf of Maine, for the little inlet upon which Grandsir' Welch's red cottage stood.

In those days yachts were less common than now, and both Ruth and Bethiah left their work to watch the boat as it ran up to the low wharf and the snowy sail fell with a musical rattle and clash of metallic rings.

The skipper, a stalwart young fellow, too handsome by half, came briskly ashore and did his errand, and, while the old servant went for the milk, Ruth stood in the open door, replying to the visitor's questions without either shyness or boldness. His eyes were just on a level with hers as she stood on the threshold above him, and their bold, merry glance saw with full appreciation how clear were her sherry-brown orbs. He removed his cap and leaned against the door-post, letting his glance stray over the landscape. Here and there upon the brown surface the keen eye detected the flame of a scarlet leaf amid the prevailing russet, but the combined effect of all the red leaves upon the plain could not warm the sombre wastes.

"Don't you get tired of the sameness?" he asked, suddenly, as if the monotony all at once seemed to him too great to be borne.

"Oh, no," Ruth answered, smiling faintly. "I like it."

He brushed back his curly, golden locks with a shapely brown hand, and regarded her more closely.

"It is like a fish in the water," was his conclusion when he spoke again. "It would drown me."

Ruth smiled again, showing her white, even teeth a little, although she did not in the least understand what he meant; and before the conversation could go farther Bethiah appeared with the milk she had been getting. Ruth put aside the stranger's offer of pay, and, with an instinct of hospitality which must have been genuine indeed to have survived so long disuse from lack of opportunity, she stepped down into the little garden-plot and picked a nosegay of the old-fashioned flowers which in the southern exposure were still unharmed by frost.

"Put a posy in my button-hole," he requested, lightly, when she gave them to him. "Pick out the prettiest."

She had never stuck a flower in a man's coat, but she was too utterly devoid of self-consciousness to be shy. She selected a beautiful clove pink, and, smiling her grave smile, thrust the stem through the button-hole of his yachting-jacket as he held out the lapel.

"It would be just the color of your cheeks," he said, "if it could only get sunburned."

A redder glow flushed up at his words, and so tempting was the innocent face before him that half involuntarily he bent forward to kiss the smooth lips. The girl drew back, in that grave, unemotional fashion of hers which was to the stranger so unaccountable at once and so fascinating, and he failed of his intent.

"Ah, well," he said, in no wise disconcerted, "keep the kiss for your sweetheart, but thank you for the flowers."

He laughed with a gleeful, deep-toned note, and turned down the

faintly-defined path to the shore again. Ruth looked on with interest at the hoisting of the sail, she smiled responsively as the two mariners doffed their caps to her, and then, regardless of the old superstition of the ill luck of watching people out of sight, kept her eyes fixed upon the pretty little craft as it skimmed over the waters, as long as it could be seen. Then she turned a comprehensive glance over all her moors, as if to take them into confidence regarding the pleasant incident which had just happened, and returned to her interrupted domestic duties. The interview had touched her with no repinings; and even could she have known that in that brief moment all the romance of her life had been acted, she would scarcely have sighed. She smiled as she went about her homely occupations, and flushed a little with the consciousness of innocent vanity as she found herself glancing into the glass at the reflection of her softly-glowing cheeks, reddened with health and with the sun.

This September day was the single glowing spot in the slow, mellow years of Ruth's life. She came and went, slept and waked, perhaps even dreamed. She was always in a happy, contented repose among her moors, becoming of them every day more and more completely a part. The wide plains grew green in spring with transient verdure, the purple petals of the rhodora flushed through their brief day and dropped into the shallow brown pools left by the late rains in the hollows; then all the waste turned to fawn and russet under the suns of summer, and the cycle of the year was completed by deepening browns and the wide stretches of snow. Now and again great rolling masses of mist came up from the sea and hid wold and wave alike from sight, but yet the sense of the plains was like a presence to Ruth, as, with heart warm as a nest beneath the mother-bird's breast, she went her way and lived her span of life.

She was far from being dull in her feelings. Indeed, for one in her station and surroundings, she was unusually sensitive to mood of shore and sky, to the beauty of the sunsets or of the wild flowers which sprang amid the low shrubs. She was simply content. She was so perfectly in harmony with her surroundings that she could not be unhappy. She grew as a bluebell grows. She was not deficient in womanly sentiment. She thought sometimes of the handsome sailor lad whose bold brown eyes had looked into hers, and she smiled anew with simple pleasure that he had found her fair. She remembered the audacious gleam which crossed his face when he bent forward to kiss her, and she did not forget his words about a sweetheart. She never spoke of her memories,—she came of a reticent race, and neither Grandsir' Welsh nor Bethiah was especially adapted to the reception of confidences,—but she speculated concerning the sweetheart she never had and of whose coming fate gave no sign. There was never any tinge of melancholy in these reflections. She accepted life for what it was too simply to be sad, even with that vague oppression which seemed to casual observers the obvious consequence of the overpowering presence of the wastes.

As years went on, she accepted the fact that the time of dreams of love was past, and with placid content she reflected that the shadow of

the ungiven kiss of the sailor would never be disturbed by the pressure of lover's lip upon hers.

It is between twenty and thirty that the temperament of a woman becomes fixed, and all her future irrevocably made or marred. Before this her character is too flexible, after this too rigid, for impressions to be lasting. During these years the peace of the wide, calm, and sombre moorlands stamped indelibly upon Ruth a sweet, grave content which nothing could destroy or shake.

There came a time when into the calm of the old house death rushed with that dreadful precipitancy which always marks his coming, even when expected, and old Grandsir' Welsh, long past fourscore, was, in the quaint language of the King James version, gathered to his fathers.

In the gray dawn Ruth tapped softly at the hives of the bees which stood, straw-thatched, against the eastern end of the cottage, and announced the sad news, firmly believing that unless within twelve hours the swarms were told of death they would desert their homes. Then in the sunny autumn afternoon a funeral procession of boats trailed from the red cottage to the graveyard behind the church in the village where slept such of his forefathers as the sea had spared to die in their beds. With evenly dipping oars went first the quaintly-shaped pinky bearing the coffin between two stout fishermen, one at prow and one at stern; while after followed the dories in which were the few nearer relatives who had come to attend the services at the house.

Ruth sat beside a cousin and listened half unconsciously to the plash of the oars and the rhythmic beat of the waves against the boat, looking back with tear-dimmed eyes to the red house until it was by distance blended with the dun country as the last spark dies amid the ashes. She was sad, and she felt that oppressive terror which the presence of death brings; yet her calm was not seriously or permanently shaken.

In their relentless, even course the years moved on, and one day in spring, when the rhodora was in all its glory, and the one bush of mountain-laurel in all the plains, which had strayed into the heath like a lamb in the wilderness, was as white in the distance as a bunch of upland maybloom, again Ruth went softly and gravely to tell the bees that death had been to the red house, and again the procession of boats, like the Egyptian train over the Lake of the Dead, bore away the mortal remains of faithful old Bethiah.

Ruth's relatives in the village tried to induce her now to come to them, and, when she could not be moved to do this, urged her at least to have some one live with her. She was getting to be an old woman, they said among themselves, although in truth she was little past fifty, and, since for that part of the world she was not ill provided with worldly goods, there was no lack of those who were willing to take up their abode in the red house. But Ruth put all offers aside, kindly, indeed, but decisively. She was pleased to live alone; not from a misanthropic dislike of her kind, but because it was so deep and inexhaustible a delight to her to brood happily among her plains. More and more she loved these umber wastes, over which cloud-shadows

drifted like the darkening ripple of the wind on the sea. She knew all their ways, those mysterious paths which wind between the hillocks of deserted heaths as if worn with the constant passing of invisible feet, and she was never weary of wandering among the ragged hummocks, breathing in the salt air from the sea and noting with happy eyes all the weeds and wild flowers, the shrubs that were too inconspicuous to be singled out at a distance, but which to the careful and loving observer revealed themselves as full of beauty. She was fond of the faint, sweet scents of the opening flowers in spring, of the dying grass in fall. She never thought about her feelings or phrased the matter to herself, but she loved so perfectly these wastes which seemed so desolate that they were to her as kindred and home: perhaps even the maternal instinct which is inborn in every woman's breast found some not quite inadequate expression in her almost passionate fondness for the great heath.

Her relatives spoke of her always as strange, and were aggrieved that her ways should be different from theirs; but everything that continues comes in time to be accepted, and as the years went on Ruth's method of life came to seem proper because it had so long been the same. A brawny-armed fisher cousin sailed over from the village every Sunday morning to see that all was well at the red house, and to bring whatever might be needed from the village store. Sometimes in winter he found her house half buried in snow, but he never could report that she appeared either discontented or sad.

It was of the coming of this emissary that Ruth was thinking on this Saturday night in September where first this record found her. She had been reflecting much to-day about dying. In her walk about the moors she had come upon a dead bird, and the sight had suggested to her her own end. She acknowledged to herself that she was old, and for perhaps the only time in her life her thought had formulated a general truth. She had regarded the tiny corpse at her feet, and then, looking about upon the moors, it came over her how immortal is the youth of the world and how brief is man's life. The land about her was no older than when she had looked upon it with baby eyes. For a single instant a poignant taste of bitterness seemed set to her lips; then in a moment the very wide, changeless heath that had caused her pain seemed itself somehow to assuage it.

To-night sitting here she admitted to herself that her strength had failed somewhat of late. Yes, she was old. It was almost half a century ago that that bold-eyed, handsome stranger had compared the color in her cheeks to a clove pink. She smiled serenely although her reflections were of age and death, so perfectly did she recall the sunny day, and the air with which the sailor would have kissed her. Placid and content in the gathering dusk, she smiled her own grave, sweet smile, which it were scarcely too fanciful to liken to the odor of the clove pink of her garden-plot whose hue half a century ago had been in her cheek. She had but one regret in leaving life, and that was to leave her moorlands. Yet she had found existence so pleasant and had been so well content that she could not understand why people so usually spoke of life as sad. But she could not think without pain of leaving the

plains behind and going away to lie in the bleak hill-side graveyard where slept her kinsfolk. It had never occurred to her before to consider to which she held more strongly, her people or the wide brown stretches of open about her, but to-night she debated it with herself and decided it. She resolved to say to her cousin to-morrow that she wished her grave made in the plains. Very likely her relatives would object. They had always thought her ideas strange; but they would surely let her have her way in this. She would even make some concessions and perhaps let Cousin Sarah come to live with her if they would agree to do as she wished about this. It would be so great a comfort to her to be assured that she was not in death to be separated from her dearly-loved moors. She liked Sarah well enough, only that it was so pleasant to live alone with her bees and the plains. Besides, if she should chance to die alone, who would tell the bees? It would be a pity to have the fine swarms lost.

Suddenly she started up in the dusk, and, without knowing clearly why she did it, she wrote on the bottom of the list of errands which she always made on Saturday for her cousin her wish concerning her grave. The spot she mentioned was a knoll near the house, where the ground rose a little before it dipped into the sea. She reflected as she wrote that it was wiser to be prepared for whatever could happen, and, although she would not own it frankly even to herself in these lonely musings, Ruth had felt strangely weak and worn to-day.

She frugally blew out the candle when she was done, and with calm content sat down again in her rocking-chair by the window darkening to "a glimmering square." She heard the sound of the sea and the low wind blowing over the wide plains; and, lulled by the soft sounds, she fell at last asleep.

The wind rose in the night, and it was afternoon when the cousin from the village came in sight of the red house. No smoke rose from its chimney, and as he tied his clumsy sail-boat to the low wharf where so long ago a yacht had been briefly fastened, a long wavering line of bees rose glistening from the straw-thatched hives, floating upward and away like the departing soul of mortal. Their mistress had been dead more than twelve hours, and they had not been told. Perhaps it was a chance flight; perhaps they were seeking her serene spirit over the moors she loved so well.

Arlo Bates.

AS DAYS GO DOWN THE WEST.

AS days go down the west, and tender stars
All rimmed about with heavens blue come forth
And set their light-ships in the trackless sea
Whose highways stretch away from south to north,
I think how days have risen in the east
And flashed like meteors from hill to hill,
Set full of sunny hours, till evening came
To close them like rose-petals soft and still.

And that my work but poorly hath been done,
 And that my day in idleness hath set,
 With saddened eyes I look into the west
 And watch it pass away with keen regret.
 Those precious moments lost in dreaming mood,
 Those perfect hours forever past me by!—
 Small wonder that new stars are blurred with tears,
 And old days wafted heavenward with a sigh.

Marion Manville.

OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP.

THE peculiar modern development of English proverbs in the United States may be considered a sort of evolution, and this evolutionary process has produced some very revolutionary effects. For example, we are now told that "The race is not *always* to the slow," and that "To the pugnaciously pure all things are impure." Sometimes the old proverbs merely take an additional clause, as in the following case: "Be virtuous and you will be happy; but you won't have a good time." The truth of this proposition is undeniable. That calm and serene happiness which virtue gives is certainly the best and most lasting kind of happiness; but to "have a good time," in the popular sense of the term, one must base his actions on a different principle.

In some instances the evolved proverb is merely a reversal of the older form. We now hear that there is no difficulty in accounting for taste. The Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, and other continental expressions of a cognate idea are not affected by this change; for "Each to his taste," and "There should be no disputing about taste," are rules which might be included among axioms. But the English proverb has lost ground in this country, and is fast going out of fashion. The reasons for special tastes are given in every case without any trouble by psychologists and physiologists, and are generally based on the great principle that we naturally want what we don't possess. As it is our acquisitiveness which keeps the world from figuratively standing still, the reason for the existence of taste itself may be furnished with equal ease.

Yet, in spite of the facility with which matters of taste are traced to their cause, many people will probably go on believing that all tastes spring up in a spontaneous sort of way, with which biogenesis has nothing at all to do.

The proverb about the early bird and his provisions has grown into one with a diametrically opposite moral. The new version is, "The early worm was seized by the rapacious fowl." The worm's early rising is held up to obloquy as the cause of his downfall, and it is intimated that if he had stayed comfortably in bed until nine o'clock he would have escaped destruction. An evolved proverb of a similar character says, "Never put off till to-morrow what you can do week after next."

Some of the proverbs our ancestors thought quite too fine and impressive to be improved in any way have undergone a radical change in conformity with the growth of modern inventions, and are now couched in language which Addison and Pope, or even Washington Irving, would have considered absolutely

meaningless. Instead of "The pen is mightier than the sword," we now have "The type-writer is more dynamic than the Gatling gun." The time-honored aphorism about the practical advantages of probity has developed into "Honesty may be the *best* policy, but letting yourself be found out is certainly the worst." The famous verse in *Hudibras* about the man who fights with a due regard for his own safety has become "He who fights and runs away may live to be a contractor and own whole railroads."

These new American forms of the old proverbs give the impression that we are a good deal smarter than our forefathers, but not by any means as steady and honest as they. The general tone of the paragraphs in many of our newspapers is of the same character, and in some cases these editorial scintillations are the distinctive feature of the paper. While the opera of "Pinafore" was still in full blast, one of these paragraphers announced that it was a thing which "*any* young lady might allow her mother to see and hear." What would our respected grandmothers have said to that?

But in reality this evolution in proverbs indicates nothing more than a strong tendency among a certain class of journalistic scribes to satirize all generally accepted notions and to make fun of everything that comes in their way. We may not be more righteous than our ancestors, but our faults and transgressions are blazoned on thousands of printed pages every day, and things which were very easy to conceal in their times now form the chief stock in trade of enterprising rival newspapers. Instead of treating our faults as leniently as truth will allow, or even frankly acknowledging them without comment, we eagerly exaggerate all the evil we do and put it in the worst possible light. Foreigners naturally take us at our word, and it is not strange that writers like Sardou should make their American characters ruffians and swindlers of a pronounced type.

Yet, in spite of this pessimistic view of our own natures, we Americans of to-day are probably about as respectable as any generation that has lived before us anywhere. If we knew as much about earlier times as we do of our own, perhaps we should think ourselves blessed in coming into the world as late as we did. Croakers are always ready to bewail the iniquities of their own epoch and glorify the past. Unless the human mind shall in the mean while undergo a marvellous change, a great many well-meaning people in the year 1986 will say, with perfect sincerity, "How much honest and better the world was in the good old days near the end of the nineteenth century!" W. W. Crane.

WHETHER or not the South needs Federal aid in the task of educating her illiterates, that task is evidently a pretty serious one. So, at least, one would judge from occasional literary efforts in the Southern newspapers. Here, for instance, in a North Carolina paper, we find a card from an irate party who, it seems, has been unjustly "entitled" of the grave offence of being a watchman:

A CARD.

I have herne the replies several indifrent times that I was a watchman at the cotton yard I never watched there only induring the time the burnt cotton was there, that was five indifrent nights, I was entitled about it last night on the street

B H IPOCK

The same newspaper, a year or two ago, published a letter from a deserted "up-country" husband to the city postmaster, which is as ingenious an effort to

master that art which evidently does not come by nature, as could well be devised. There is a certain pathos in it which is quite superior to orthography and needs no light from the dictionary as to the meaning of words. One may be permitted to suspect that William H. Spencer drew somewhat on his imagination for his facts in asserting that he "did not a buse" his wife, "nether Drive her a Way," but it is impossible, notwithstanding his evident solicitude for the return of the "large trunk and flat load of beading" and other personalities, to doubt that the man does "lov" his wife and "cant Do eny thing withdouth" her. Let us hope that the postmaster was "in to Rested" and succeeded in restoring the girl with the "wary Pretty turn and Whit teeth" to her distressed and admiring husband. Here is the letter as published in full by the postmaster as the best method of letting it "be knowen all a Round:"

MIDDLETON, MTD COUNTY, N. C.
April the 101884.

MY DEAR SIR:—I Da sire you to mak an in quirin for my wife, if you Pleas, and hav her taken up & sent back to me on the boat, becaus she left with thout a Cause. Please be in to Rested a bout it. I did not a buse her, nether Drive her a Way. I need my wife bad. I cant Do withdouth her; I lov her & Wauns her back a gain. be for I married her, her name was Mary Rhumly, but know her in tidle is Mary Spencer. Plas in quiry for her, Mary Spencer. I for bid eny man or Wo man of Clokin in thir house or Primises or any Whire a bout. let it be knowen all a Round i shall Work act Courding to law. My Wif mother is nam Sarrah Rhumly, Witter woman, I Did not Drive her off or tell her to go be Cause I lov her; i Works for & her alone. I am a farm mer & I have hevvy Crop on the Ground know & no boddy to Do for me. I am farmin on Mr. D. S. Pugh land and my wife left me in morn & cant Do eny thing withdouth my wife. I Was married in Craven County. i must hav my wife. the law will lou me to tak my wif iney Whire and if you want to know eny thin about Rit to Mr. D. S. Pugh. I for bid eny PerSon of Clokin my Wife. She Wint off on her on a cord. I did not mak her leav. I did'n threaten her a tall and must hav her back a gain. I hope this chapous Will take her. I will have her by law. She carred a large trunk and a flat load of beading sheet and lot of tin, glasses. de mand all she carred. Send her back to me on the same boat. Cap-tain Don suffer her to leave the boat; hav her taken up and sent to me. She well known in the tound. Dark ginger cake Collor, Wary brit eyes, wary Speach, & swing her left arm & wary Pretty turn & Whit teeth. tak her Enny how & send to me. Send all she cared, a nic hat & box & other. She carried all she had off. her brother is nam Danneal Rhumly, her sister name Melvinne Rhumly. I hav not Don eny think to her that she left.

yours truly,

William H. Spencer,
Mary Spencer.

My Wife & child all i got.

Another appeal to public sympathy, in a protest from "som ten or fifteen person" whom a proud "Ice-Porter" omitted in the distribution of ice, waxes fairly eloquent. After taking the "aurthority to Say it is the Wrong Boy in the Wrong place," the protest goes on to say, "We was all denied. Just when old Sol was at high meridian and the fervent heat was descending. Just then a

poore Exhausted Being was panting for a cool Sip of Ice water as the ox pant at the Water Brook. So did we hope there will be a change."

It would be interesting to know if the Wrong Boy was summarily deposed from the wrong place in answer to this prayer, but history is silent no less as to his fate than as to that of the "brit"-eyed girl of dark ginger cake Collor.

L. S. H.

BOOK-TALK.

LORD CAMPBELL—was it not?—once wrote a book to prove that Shakespeare, from the internal evidence of his dramas, must have been an accomplished lawyer. The book is naturally highly prized by the advocates of the Baconian theory. It is true the anti-Baconians hold that Bacon never could have written the dramas, because they are full of legal mistakes which might call a blush to the cheek of even an attorney's clerk. But this only emphasizes the great truth that if Bacon did not write the dramas he ought to have done so, just as he ought to have survived to write the modern novels. Only a man who has taken all knowledge to be his province could be fully equipped as a dramatist in Shakespeare's time or a novelist in ours. Science, philosophy, theology, medicine, law, should be at the fingers' ends of writers whose plots are continually bringing them face to face with the minutiae of those sciences. It cannot please the author of the last new novel to learn that his pet clergyman has betrayed signal ignorance of the religion he professes, that his judge has made rulings contrary to all law, that his heroine never could have died of the disease with which he has afflicted her, but is still existing somewhere in cloud-land as an interesting valetudinarian.

In "The Holy Rose," for example, which was reviewed last month, Mr. Besant makes his heroines—pious and devoted Catholics—sell a valuable heirloom which had once been blessed by a pope. A good Catholic would look upon such a sale as a sacrilege, a mortal sin. Even Walter Scott, who was usually careful of his accessories, makes the Fair Maid of Perth go to mass in the afternoon, whereas that service can only be performed in the morning. It has been urged against Wilkie Collins, who is fond of introducing the sick-room into his novels, that he does not always succeed in correctly diagnosing his patient's case, in spite of the fact that his proof-sheets, so the gossip runs, are submitted to professional criticism. But it is in law that the novelist's feet have strayed the furthest, for law has a natural fascination for the romancer in its close connection with crime, mystery, and tragedy, while it is a slippery subject even in the hands of an expert. Some of the famous trial scenes that live vividly in the memory of the old novel-reader—the trial scenes, for example, in "Very Hard Cash," in "Griffith Gaunt," and in "Orley Farm"—show all the layman's unfamiliarity with the laws of evidence, and to the legal mind have about equal verisimilitude with the still more famous trial scene in "The Merchant of Venice." The greatest blunderers, of course, are the lady novelists,—Miss Braddon, Mrs. Henry Wood, and our own dear Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth. In her "Missing Bride" the latter has given us a trial scene where the jury are drawn not by the sheriff,

but by "idle curiosity." They "arrive unprejudiced," however, in which frame of mind they offer a noble contrast to the judge, whose shameful partiality is painted in glaring colors. That laymen and laywomen should blunder is natural enough, however; it is natural enough even when the laymen, Charles Reade and Anthony Trollope, for example, had eaten dinners at Lincoln's Inn. But that Samuel Warren, a trained lawyer, in active practice, a Q. C., should make an error in the very turning-point of a novel written with the utmost care and elaborated with great effect, is really remarkable. Yet this is only the fact. In "Ten Thousand a Year," when the crisis of interest has been reached in the trial scene, a deed which would have decided the case is set aside by the judge because an erasure is discovered in a material point. The clerk who had engrossed the deed had made the erasure through carelessness. It is true that Blackstone lays the rule down without qualification that an erasure vitiates a deed. But the weight of authority, from Coke down to Greenleaf, has decided that the jury must determine whether the erasure was made before or after signing, and unless they find it was made after signing the deed will stand.

Here is "Ivan Ilyitch and other Stories," by Count Lyof N. Tolstol (Thomas Y. Crowell & Co.), which Nathan Haskell Dole has translated from the Russian. Ivan Ilyitch is the story of a sick-room. Is the pathology all right? one cannot help asking. Whatever the doctors may say, the preachers at least can have no fault to find with the story, except that it usurps their function. It is one of the most forcible sermons ever penned,—as forcible as that ghastly and terrible chapter in which Carlyle has pictured Louis XV. on his death-bed. The incidents are of the simplest. Ivan Ilyitch is a Russian official. An average man mentally and morally, who takes the world as he finds it, who aims only to live comfortably and respectably in the eyes of his neighbors, who is absorbed in the minutiae of daily life and in vulgar thoughts and ambitions, he has no leisure to cultivate the higher emotions or the kindly affections. At the period of his greatest worldly success he injures himself by a fall while arranging his new residence in obedience to the whims of his querulous wife and his own aspirations for elegance. It is nothing, apparently,—only a slight bruise, which passes off in a day or two. But for some weeks Ivan complains of a strange taste in his mouth and an uneasiness in the left side of his abdomen. The uneasiness increases. Ivan consults the doctors. First one celebrity gives his opinion, then another. Ivan only learns that he is in a bad way. He is exasperated at the cold-blooded scientific manner in which the doctors dwell upon the symptoms that strike him with anguish and terror. He is exasperated still more by the coldness and indifference of his wife and daughter. The former even seems to look upon his illness as an added indignity put upon herself. He grows worse, and takes to his bed. The doctors cheerily consult and disagree; the family continue their wonted occupations and amusements; on the poor stricken wretch, face to face with the awful horror of death, the lesson of the vanity and emptiness of life—above all, the vanity and emptiness of the life which he has been leading—presses with hideous force. He hates his wife, he hates his daughter, he hates himself; he dies at last in mental and bodily torture. The widow assumes becoming mourning, weeps in public, and in private inquires about the insurance policy; mass is celebrated over the remains; a number of friends gather at the funeral. That is the whole story. No words can do justice to its ghastly impressiveness.

Not in a spirit of hypercriticism, but as curious matter for speculation, it might not be amiss to ask whether Ivan Ilyitch is, after all, a consistent reality? That in conventional critical language he is true to the broad general facts of human nature is undeniable. A man whose career of health and worldly prosperity had been suddenly arrested by sickness and the fear of death might suffer in the way that Ivan Ilyitch does, if he were a man of sensitive moral fibre, no matter what amount of selfishness and indifference to his better impulses his life might have engendered. Tolstoi himself, for example, would have suffered thus if he had been cut down in a similar fashion at any time during the ten years of which he writes, "I put men to death in war, I fought duels to slay others, I lost at cards, wasted my substance wrung from the sweat of peasants, punished the latter cruelly, rioted with loose women, and deceived men. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, and murder, all committed by me, not one crime omitted, and yet I was not the less considered by my equals a comparatively moral man." *Mutatis mutandis*, and allowing for some penitential exaggeration, these words would fairly well describe the life of the average young man not only in Russia, but in France or England or America. Tolstoi says that he cannot now recall those years without a painful feeling of horror and loathing. But he also says that during those years he had been stifling his higher aspirations. The average man who has no higher aspirations to stifle looks back upon such misspent years with neither horror nor loathing. A tough conscience and a good digestion carry a sinner through life pretty comfortably. The digestion may be impaired, but the tough conscience endureth. The Reviewer remembers hearing a clergyman say that the cheerfuller death-beds were those of the sinners rather than of the saints. In one of his poems Byron asserts that death has greater terrors for the pious ascetic than for the sated voluptuary.

Tolstoi has simply, by a supreme effort of imagination, put himself, with his sensitive conscience, his acuter perceptions, in the place of the stricken Ivan. So Dickens has imagined himself in Bill Sykes's place, in Jonas Chuzzlewit's place, and written out the sensations he would have experienced. A brutal animal like Bill Sykes, a narrow-minded sneak like Chuzzlewit, could never feel as the novelist makes them feel. Hawthorne was more successful with Dimmesdale, for Hawthorne *was* Dimmesdale, and he could picture to himself his mental furnishment. The greatest genius is as hopelessly limited within the four walls of his own being as the greatest dunce. "The difficult task of knowing another soul," says George Eliot, "is not for young gentlemen whose consciousness is chiefly made up of their own wishes." Well, that difficult task is not for the great geniuses either. We are all of us hero-worshippers, and inclined to pay divine honors to our idols. The great genius stares with purblind eyes into the infinite, and because he sees a little further than we do we call him a seer, we reverence him as a demi-god. He casts his poor little plummet into the fathomless ocean of human nature, and because he goes deeper than we do we think he has touched bottom. When we say that a writer has great insight into character, we mean that he describes the people around us in a way that seems to us, who know even less than he, true and life-like. When he concerns himself with fictitious characters it is impossible to find him out. When he deals in history he is equally safe, for he makes better use of the materials that are at every one's command. A vivid conception of a man or a period need not be a true one,—indeed, is probably a false one.

"Henry Hamond," "Romola," "The French Revolution," merely prove that writers of genius have been able to represent to themselves the periods to which these works refer under certain aspects, not that those aspects are true. Paint Savonarola, Marlborough, Danton, in a sufficiently vivid manner, and none will question the likeness. Scott's Louis XI. is, in critical cant, very complete, but that does not prove that it is like the original. It merely proves that Scott had a more vivid imagination than is usually granted to the sons of men. If the writer of insight deals with the characters around him, he is more liable to be tripped up. When Carlyle speaks of "the most popular of men,—inoffensive, like a worn sixpence that has no physiognomy left," he produces an epigram that standing apart from the context is striking and life-like and apparently true. Its untruth is revealed the moment we find that Charles Sumner is the person so described. If Hawthorne had applied his clever and acute description of Margaret Fuller to a fictitious character, no one would have questioned its truth to nature. But when he labelled it Margaret Fuller its injustice became apparent to those who knew that lady better than he did. Dickens in one of his prefaces says, "I have never touched a character precisely from the life, but some counterpart of that character has incredulously asked me, Now, really, did I ever really see one like it?" Probably the inquirer was right, the novelist wrong. Indeed, the novelist gives himself away, to use the expressive *argot* of the street, in his next sentence. "All the Pecksniff family upon earth" (he continues) "are quite agreed, I believe, that Mr. Pecksniff is an exaggeration, and that no such character ever existed." Well, Mr. Pecksniff never did exist. As a type of hypocrisy and sanctimoniousness he is excellent, as an attempt at the portrayal of individual character he is a monstrous failure.

The fourteen other stories in the volume were originally written as tracts for the people, to enforce certain favorite doctrines of the author in simple and homely language. They will all repay perusal. Quaint, ingenious, and fanciful in themselves, they are doubly interesting from the insight they give into the personality of a very remarkable man. Of "Ivan the Fool" this is especially true; but, though that story is a work of genius in a literary sense, from a politico-economical stand-point it can no more be taken seriously than can the fulminations of that great and erratic Englishman, John Ruskin. Indeed, if the author were unknown, it might almost be mistaken for a malicious burlesque on his pet doctrine of non-resistance. The translation is generally good, but in his anxiety to preserve the flavor of the original Mr. Dole has occasionally sacrificed good English and even good sense to literalness. In a school-boy's composition the insertion of the brackets in the sentence "Immediately his belly [ache] went away" might not have the same ludicrous effect it has in the present instance. And if this were indeed a school-boy's composition, would not Master Dole get a bad mark for a paragraph such as this?—"Pakhom settled down. He got cattle. He had three times as much land as he had had before, and the land was fertile. Life was tenfold better than it had been in the old time; had all the arable land and fodder that he needed. Keep as many cattle as you like."

The criticism which groups Tolstoi with Howells and James as a "realist" seems a very narrow and mistaken one. Indeed, the word "realist" is getting to be as much of a shibboleth in this latter part of the nineteenth century

as the word "correct" was in the eighteenth century, and has been equally conventionalized and restricted in its meaning. In any large sense of the words, Addison and Pope were not as correct as Shakespeare and Milton, nor are Howells and James as real as Thackeray and Scott. Tolstoi, in everything but contemporaneity, stands as far apart from the American novelists as Swift did from the rest of the Queen Anne men. There is a perpetual sense of grasp and vigor in his writings, an earnestness, a sincerity, a moral force, which are lacking in the Americans. On the other hand, he lacks their winning grace, their deft and artistic touch, their humor, as well as that sense of conventional fitness which is an excellent thing in its way, but which prevents them from ministering to the higher needs of the soul, exactly as it prevented the trim muses of the Queen Anne period. There seems to be a certain propriety in speaking of Mr. Howells and Mr. James, of Mr. Addison and Mr. Pope, but somehow one is reluctant to give these artificial titles to those great writers who, while they are not so careful about the "realism" or the "correctness" of their accessories, touch the truer and deeper self of the reader. Tolstoi has been called a realist, but the realism of "Anna Karenina" is a very different thing from the realism of any American novel. And no American realist would be so courageous, so earnest, or so mentally unsophisticated as to produce a book like "My Confession" (Crowell), which in its frank directness, its logical eccentricity, its mournful impressiveness, its fiery zeal, reminds one by turns of Bunyan's "Grace Abounding" and of St. Augustine's "Confessions."

All thoughtful men are impressed by the disparity between man—who claims to be a reasonable and immortal being, who appears upon this planet for a brief to-day, a halting-ground between two eternities, with mysteries pressing above, around, and within him for solution—and his follies, his pettinesses, his absorbing interest in the trivialities of daily life. The average man, however, though he may occasionally be stirred from his security when a marvel like birth or death enters into his own circle, soon returns to common working life and the feelings and habits which this world engenders. We call him the practical man, the man of common sense. Other men also return to daily life, retaining a vivid impression of their deeper thoughts, feeling the contrast keenly, but struck rather with its oddity than its sadness. These are the humorists,—the Horaces, the Montaignes, the Lambes, the Howellses. Other men, again, recoil with scorn or wrath or pity from the lower side of life. The vanity, the transitoriness, of all human pursuits presses at all times upon their consciousness. They would fain have the whole world be as men picture it to themselves when temporarily regarding it under the influence of their higher thoughts only. These are the poets, the prophets, the religious enthusiasts,—the Buddhas, Dantes, Carlyles, Tolstois. They are often one-sided, they often lack the balance of mind which humor bestows, but their very one-sidedness makes them the more intense, and intensity is more powerful than humor. It is these men who impress themselves most upon their fellows and add most largely to the vein of thought which feeds the moral life of society. The world puts its own interpretation on their teaching, and brings it within the possibilities of actual life; nevertheless it receives it and abides by it, until other teaching comes to supersede it.

One of the most entertaining books that have recently been issued is Henry T. Finck's "Romantic Love and Personal Beauty: their Development, Cause

Relations, and Historic and National Peculiarities" (Macmillan & Co.). It is largely a mosaic of quotations,—showing wide reading, retentive memory, and excellent taste,—but the quotations are held in place and given a philosophical continuity by a strain of original and brilliant reasoning, the aim of the whole being to show that Romantic Love, the prematrimonial affection which a modern lover feels for his mistress, is in its universality a recent development in the race, although great men as far back as Dante and Petrarch (great men being necessarily in advance of their time) experienced and described it. The love which Mr. Finck celebrates is that which Emerson describes in "Each and All:"

The lover watched his chosen maid
As through the virgin choir she strayed,
Nor knew her beauty's best attire
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.
At last she came to his hermitage,
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage:
The gay enchantment was undone,
A gentle wife, but fairy none.

It is this gay enchantment, this temporary exaltation of a woman into a goddess, so that the touch of her finger-tips is a mystery and a delight, and even a veil blown from her head against the lover's person is an intoxication of the senses,—it is this sublimation of the sexual instinct which Mr. Finck claims to be of modern growth. In a general way he is undoubtedly right, though he may err in assuming that the expression of the feeling would be coeval with its birth. Men are shy of speaking of emotions that are too sacredly individual; they need an audience, no matter of how few, so that it be fit. Further, does the birth of Romantic Love in literature itself date no further back than Dante's "Vita Nuova," and is Mr. Finck right in denying that there is any infusion of the sentiment he celebrates in the amatory poems of Catullus, and, above all, in the Song of Songs?

"Thralldom," by Julian Sturgis (Appleton), is not the sort of work we have learned to expect from that very clever writer, and the departure from his usual manner is hardly a successful one. The author of "An Accomplished Gentleman" and "Dick's Wanderings" is delightfully at home in the real life of modern English society and politics, but this excursus into the fields of romance, with uncanny negresses and mesmerists and mysterious artists as the centres of interest, is disappointing.

"Brief Institutes of General History," by Prof. E. Benjamin Andrews (Silver, Rogers & Co.), is a book meant for teachers or advanced scholars, for people who wish to synthesize what knowledge they possess, rather than for beginners. It aims to give not merely an outline history of the world, but also "the *rationale* of historical movement," and succeeds in being a painstaking compilation of the latest views, discoveries, and theories, put into a somewhat crabbed and obscure style. Perhaps the book would have had a less bewildering appearance if the substance of the notes had been worked into the text (as it is, there are more notes than text), but there is no doubt that the select bibliography at the end of each chapter is of great value as a syllabus and register of the best literature for side-readings.

On the other hand, the three volumes of "Universal History" published by

J. B. Lippincott Company,—“Ancient History” by George Rawlinson, “Medieval” by Professor George Thomas Stokes, and “Modern” by Professor Arthur St. George Patton,—these three volumes form an excellent manual for historical students at any stage of their education. They are neither so philosophical nor so declamatory as Professor Andrews’s book; they only aim to tell the story of man from the outside in simple and intelligible words, and to deal very lightly with philosophical theories. A useful supplementary volume on “Geological History,” the natural history of the earth and of its pre-human inhabitants, has been added by Edward Hull, director of the Geological Survey of Ireland. The idea of presenting a popular summary of the historical portion of geological science is a novel one, and the happy thought is happily carried out.

Under the title of “Knickerbocker Nuggets,” Messrs. G. P. Putnam & Sons have begun a reissue of certain classics in dainty miniature form and in a binding and typography that are a delight to the eye. The volumes so far issued include “Select Tales from the *Gesta Romanorum*,” “Headlong Hall and Nightmare Abbey,” by Thomas Love Peacock, “Gulliver’s Travels,” and “Tales from Irving.” Many readers will be especially glad to obtain those clever little satires by Peacock which evidently suggested to Mr. Mallock the scope and method of his “New Republic.”

The series of “Lives of the Presidents,” written for boys by William O. Stoddard (Stokes), has been continued by two new volumes, “Madison, Monroe, and John Quincy Adams” and “Jackson and Van Buren.” These books are written agreeably and pleasantly, and even a grown reader need not be ashamed to give them a place in his library, provided his teeth are not set on edge by the gilded and gaudy binding.

“Uncle Rutherford’s Attic,” by Joanna H. Mathews (Stokes), and “Esther,” by Rosa Nouchette Carey (Lippincott), each bear the sub-title “A Book for Girls,” and each can be placed with perfect safety in the hands of any member of the audience to which it is addressed. But if Paterfamilias is anxious to amuse his girls as well as to edify them, he had better choose Miss Carey’s book, which is brighter and more readable, and gives a quite charming insight into English home-life.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes’s “Our Hundred Days in Europe” (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) is a cheery, genial, and wholesome record of his recent European trip, brightened up here and there with well-bred personalities concerning the distinguished and interesting persons whom he met. But, in spite of the biographic and autobiographic value of the book, it cannot take rank with his more serious work.

“The English Language, its Grammar, History, and Literature,” by Professor J. M. D. Meiklejohn, of the University of St. Andrews in Scotland (D. C. Heath & Co.), is an intelligent and intelligible compilation, which combines in a handy and convenient form the features of a grammar, a history of the English language, and a history of English literature. The work is well done, and may be recommended not only to students, but to “all who wish for any reason to review the leading facts of English language and literature,”—a class of persons whom the author expresses a desire to reach.

CURRENT NOTES.

In a previous issue of this magazine, occasion was taken to commend the efforts of the American Society for the Prevention of Adulteration of Food, of which Dr. H. W. Amerling, of Philadelphia, is the enthusiastic president, in behalf of legislation by Congress for the suppression of the present wholesale adulteration in foods, drugs, and liquors. It is gratifying to note the growth and earnestness of public sentiment in favor of such legislation, as evidenced by the discussion of the subject in the public press. A most wholesome sign of purer food for the future is exhibited also in the action of the retail dealers of the country, who through their trade associations in the centres of population are harmoniously working towards restrictive legislation. The tradesmen who come next to the consumers have it entirely within their power by united and systematic action to drive every article that is adulterated or unwholesome out of the market. The reports of the meetings of many of the grocers' associations show an enthusiasm upon the subject which portends much good to the public at large.

In our former reference to this matter we expressed the opinion that the most effective remedy for the suppression of impure food would be found in public exposure, and an instance of the efficacy of this method was cited in the alum baking-powders, where such an exposure fearlessly made was the means of preventing almost entirely the sale of these dangerous goods for years. Acting upon a similar opinion, apparently, the Massachusetts State Board of Health, one of the most progressive sanitary bodies in the country, of which Dr. H. P. Walcott, of Cambridge, is at the head, has recently published the names of twenty-six baking-powders sold in New England, and warned the public against their use. Our most eminent physicians have declared that alum in food is poisonous to the system.

The State Dairy and Food Commission of Ohio, acting under the direction of the legislature, has made examinations of many of the more important articles of food sold in that State. The Commissioner has added to the usefulness of his work by prominently publishing the names of the alum baking-powders discovered, thus enabling consumers to protect themselves from a danger which it would appear from the report has become of alarming proportions in that commonwealth. The Food Commissioner goes further, and indicates the baking-powder which the official examination proved the purest and most wholesome. The best baking-powder is stated to be that which, giving the largest percentage of leavening gas, leaves the lowest percentage of resultant salts or residuum in the bread. Under this rule the cream of tartar powders are ranked as follows:

Name.	Percentage of carbon gas.	Percentage of resultant salts.
Royal	11.80	7.25
Sterling	11.	12.68
Dr. Price's	10.50	12.66
De Land's	10.	32.53

Will not New York, Pennsylvania, and the great States of the Northwest take a similar action in the interest of the public health?

ALBION W. TOURGÉE, author of "A Fool's Errand" and other books that have had a phenomenal sale, will contribute to *Lippincott's Magazine* a series of stories under the general title of "With Gauge & Swallow," illustrating the interesting, curious, and exciting phases of the law. The stories will all be complete in themselves, but will revolve around a common centre of interest. The initial story will be published in the December number. It is entitled "Professor Cadmus's Great Case," and turns on the question of expert testimony in handwriting, the tangled web of a supposed forgery being unravelled with rare ingenuity.

THE handsomest book of the year is undoubtedly Will H. Low's illustrated edition of Keats's "Sonnets and Lyrics," which forms a worthy companion to the same artist's "Lamia," issued in 1885.

THE next number of *Lippincott's Magazine* will contain a new novel by Captain Charles King, entitled "From the Ranks." Captain King's stories of military life have achieved the widest success with both military and non-military readers, and his novel of "The Deserter," published in the May number of the magazine, was immediately successful on its first issue and is still in constant and steady demand. No American author has ever succeeded in painting so accurately and so cleverly the human heart that beats beneath the gilt buttons and shoulder-straps, nor, indeed, the human heart that beats in the breast of the wives, daughters, and sweethearts of the graduates of West Point.

WALT WHITMAN, it was recently announced, was to umpire a base-ball game in Camden, New Jersey. The announcement was even printed upon the tickets of admission to the game, and it drew to the grounds a number of Whitman's admirers from Philadelphia, eager to see the poet and sage in a new and difficult rôle. But no Walt appeared upon the scene, and it was learned afterwards that the announcement had been made without his authority and even without his knowledge.

WITH the November (1886) number of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* the publishers introduced a new idea, an original feature, into periodical literature. The serial story, it appeared to them, had had its day. Readers were beginning to weary of having their fiction doled out to them in monthly instalments. They wanted the option of doing their reading in one sitting.

The publishers, therefore, abandoned the serial feature, and commenced the publication of a complete novel with every issue. Fortune favored them. Their first novel was "Brueton's Bayou," by John Habberton, a little masterpiece, in which that popular novelist outdid all his former work.

This was followed by novels from such authors as Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, Julian Hawthorne, M. G. McClelland, Lucy C. Lillie, Edgar Fawcett, Captain Charles King, etc. The public became interested; the circulation of the magazine doubled and redoubled many times over; the new feature was a success.

Encouraged by this success, the publishers have made arrangements for the coming year with some of the best and most popular American authors. Complete novels will be furnished by William H. Bishop, Captain Charles King, Mrs. A. L. Wister, Miss Julia Magruder, Miss Amélie Rives, Henry Hayes (author of "Sons and Daughters"), etc.

The list of contributors who have added brilliancy to the miscellaneous portion of the magazine will be retained. Short stories, essays, and poems will be contributed to early numbers by Amélie Rives, Thomas Nelson Page, Edgar Fawcett, Joaquin Miller, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, H. H. Boyesen, Edith M. Thomas, etc.

The autobiographical experiences of noted men and women, which have attracted attention in the past, will be continued by contributions from H. H. Boyesen, Fanny Davenport, Belva Lockwood, Lotta, Frances E. Wadleigh, Clara Barton, etc. In addition, the people whose callings or circumstances are odd or interesting in themselves will be admitted to the confessional. Thus, "An Adventuress," "An Unsuccessful Author," "A Woman-Suffrage Agitator," "A Government Clerk," "A Literary Butcher," and many others, will detail their experiences.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE IN NERVOUS EXHAUSTION.—Dr. George McKnight, Hannibal, New York, says, "I have used it in cases of nervous exhaustion, with quite satisfactory results."

IN view of the approaching reproduction of "Faust" in this country by Henry Irving and the Lyceum Company, Messrs. J. B. Lippincott Company have just ready a handsome octavo book on "Faust, the Legend and the Poem," by Wm. S. Walsh, illustrated with six etchings by Herman Faber. Mr. Walsh traces the story back through the puppet-plays, Marlowe's "Faustus," and the mediæval chap-books, to the legend of Simon Magus, although he is inclined to believe that Faust was a real character, a contemporary of Melancthon's, in whom the older legend, with other legends concerning other enchanters and magicians, was absorbed and concentrated. He attempts also to show that the poem is in its essence an autobiography; that, although it follows very closely the outlines of the mediæval puppet-play, it has informed them with an allegorical meaning which corresponds with the facts of his own mental and moral life. The compact with Mephistopheles, the Witches' kitchen, the seduction of Margaret, the Witches' Sabbath on the Brocken, the festival in the Emperor's court, the pursuit and final capture of Helena, the draining of the sea by Faust, are all shown to be poetical pictures of the phases of feeling through which the myriad-minded poet passed.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE IN INDIGESTION.—Drs. Marshall and Longacre, Olney, Illinois, say, "We have used it in cases of indigestion, with good results."

HUGH BLACK, of Ontario, claims, in the *North American Review* for October, that the famous doggerel epitaph over Shakespeare's grave, "Good Friend for Jesu's Sake Forbear," etc., is to be read by means of Bacon's bilateral cipher, and when so read reveals the secret meaning, namely,—

Francis Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays.

It would be interesting to know whether any student of cryptograms could not succeed in reading Ignatius Donnelly's name into the same lines. Mr. Black's article is ingenious and interesting, but is as curiously illogical and wrong-headed as the Millerite interpretations of Revelation which from time to time have warned the world of its approaching end.

While the Baconians are doing their best to claim Shakespeare's works for Bacon, a German writer, Eugene Reichel, has produced a critical inquiry as to "Who wrote the *Novum Organon*?" He concludes, from the internal evidence of style, that it could not have been Francis Bacon, being at once too poetical and too philosophical, although he acknowledges that here and there it has some of his finger-marks, evidently impressed with cunning after-thought to give color to the pretensions of Bacon. Who then did write the book? Shakespeare was Reichel's first guess, but he threw this aside because he deemed that the dramatist was born a little too late and must have impregnated whatever he penned with more poetry. His final conclusion is that it was a teacher of Bacon's, who, taken suddenly sick, on his death-bed intrusted his philosophical material to his promising pupil.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE GIVES SATISFACTORY RESULTS.—Dr. O. W. Weeks, Marion, Ohio, says, "Its use is followed by results satisfactory both to patient and physician."

A CURIOUS libel suit has recently attracted public attention in Germany. The great firm of Brockhaus, in its collection of Spanish novels (published in the original and sold largely in the Spanish-speaking countries of South America), included the novels of Trueba, without any compensation to the author. In an open letter, published in the *Deutsche Schriftsteller-Zeitung*, with comments by the editor, W. Lange, the author savagely protested against this treatment, and called the publishers thieves. Brockhaus brought suit against the editor for libel. But the court agreed with Lange and Trueba that the appropriation of unprotected literary property was immoral and reprehensible, and accordingly acquitted Lange. An appeal to a higher court was decided in the same way. An amusing incident in the trial was the reading by defendant's counsel of Brockhaus's own description of literary piracy in the "Conversations-Lexicon" of 1824,—viz., "that literary piracy which, defiantly mocking at right and custom, seeks its aim in reaping what others have sown. The business of a reprinter is base, he is publicly despised, his trade is immoral," etc.

HORSFORD'S ACID PHOSPHATE FOR IMPAIRED VITALITY.—Dr. F. Skillein, Pulaski, Tennessee, says, "I think it is a reliable medicine for impaired vitality."

"COUNTRY LUCK," by John Habberton, which J. B. Lippincott Company have now ready for publication, is a charming idyl of country life and a satire upon the conventionalities and affectation of social life in New York, worked together with consummate tact and skill into a delightful love-story.

THE HORSFORD ALMANAC AND COOK-BOOK mailed free on application to the Rumford Chemical Works, Providence, Rhode Island.

AMONG the many Southern writers who will grace early numbers of *Lippincott's Magazine*, special mention may be made of Miss Amélie Rives, who will contribute a novel, short stories, and poems, Thomas Nelson Page, Miss Julia Magruder, Miss M. G. McClelland, Samuel Minturn Peck, Wm. H. Hayne, and others.

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